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Anne Cullong Jun

THE MOURTRAY FAMILY.

A Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY MILLAR RITCHIE, MIDDLE STREET, CLOTH FAIR,

FOR

R. FAULDER, NEW BOND STREET.

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MRQ

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THE FAMILY OF MOURTRAY.

CHAP. I.

THE family of Mourtray had for a long ſucceſſion of ages been ſettled at Downton Hall, in one of the weſtern counties of England: the eſtate annexed to this ſeat, though not of the firſt rate, had once been conſiderable enough to give conſequence to its poſſeſſors, and no ſmall influence in the county; but, by the diminution it had ſuffered during the civil wars, when part of it had been ſold in ſupport of the royal cauſe, this

family had fallen from its ancient ſplendour; although it ſtill retained, more by courteſy than right, a degree of diſtinction amongſt the neighbouring gentry, ſeldom allowed to perſons of decayed fortunes. The name of Mourtray, too, had not wholly loſt its influence amongſt the old inhabitants of the county, in the middling claſs; for they knew, by tradition, that this family had ever been the friends and protectors of their anceſtors, and that want of means alone curtailed its natural munificence.

Six hundred a year was all that remained of the Downton eſtate; yet this ſmall income had ſufficed to enable ſome generations to live with eaſe and hoſpitality, till the immenſe influx of wealth which has poured into this kingdom of late years, added to the rapid progreſs of luxury; the riſe of every article of life and increaſe of taxes, rendered it, at the period when this hiſtory commences, barely

barely adequate to keep up the appearance of gentility.

Its preſent owner (originally a younger brother), had paſſed his youth in the army, where he had found his ſlender finances no ſmall obſtacle to preferment; therefore, when, by the death of his elder brother, the eſtate devolved upon him, he was glad, as ſoon as peace was concluded, that he could quit a profeſſion with which he had long been diſguſted.

His next ſtep was to marry a young lady of very ſmall fortune, with whom he had formed an attachment when both were extremely young: with her he reſolved to retire to Downton, and follow the good old cuſtom of his anceſtors, of reſiding entirely in the country.

This plan, at that time, met with no oppoſition from his bride: her ſituation,

previous to her marriage, had been very uncomfortable, poverty having obliged her to accept an aſylum from a croſs old uncle; and ſhe did not conſider the protection he afforded her as an adequate compenſation for the wearifome attendance he exacted. Many years had thus paſſed, and ſhe had the mortification to ſee her bloom begin to fade, with little or no proſpect of happier days, as neither her own, nor her lover's circumſtances, permitted their union.

When this at length took place, ſhe was ſo happy to become the wife of the man ſhe adored, to leave her tireſome old uncle, and have a houſe and will of her own, that ſhe conceived it impoſſible ſhe ſhould ever wiſh the leaſt change in her ſituation. Mourtray's plan had, beſides, the advantage of novelty; for hitherto ſhe had chiefly reſided in London, where ſhe had been in the habit of attending all the public amuſements, becauſe her uncle, who

who loved the world, choſe to drag her about with him, whether agreeable to her or not: no wonder, therefore, that ſhe ſhould have been ſurfeited with them, or that her imagination ſhould picture to itſelf infinite delight in the quiet of the country, in its rural amuſements, and in the joy of breathing pure air.

It was the gayeſt ſeaſon of the year, when Mrs. Mourtray, after a pleaſant journey, firſt beheld her new habitation, ſituated in the midſt of verdant downs, but which for many miles preſented no other diverſity of ſcenery, than occaſionally a peep into the vale below, where a few ſmall hamlets were thinly ſcattered. The uniformity of the downs being only broken by a narrow ſtrip, or *patch*, of arable land here and there, and by ſome ſtraggling clumps of firs perched on hills, which ſeemed more calculated to ſerve as beacons, than to ornament the landſcape.

Yet even this tame proſpect appeared charming to Mrs. Mourtray; and though Downton could not boaſt of many local beauties, the marks it exhibited of ſuperior cultivation to the adjacent country, ſtamped it with an air of diſtinction, which prepoſſeſſed her in its favour at the firſt glance.

But far ſhort was her delight to that of Mr. Mourtray; for, connected with the poſſeſſion of Downton, were a thouſand agreeable ideas, of love, liberty, and independence; with the recollection of his boyiſh days, of his grandfather's relations, of the ancient ſplendour of the family, and of various little plans of improvement that he had ſecretly meditated, if he ever were ſo happy to call his own, the two objects neareſt to his heart, his wife and his native place.

In Mrs. Mourtray's preſent frame of mind, ſhe could not fail of catching a portion

portion of her huſband's partiality to Downton, though ſhe was ſomewhat ſtartled at the ruinous ſtate of the houſe, till Mr. Mourtray aſſured her this could ſcarcely be called a diſadvantage, as it denoted its antiquity; ſhe was as eaſily perſuaded, that the paddock of thirty acres of neglected meadow land, had a very park-like appearance, and that a ſmall plantation of firs and evergreens, terminating in a kitchen-garden incloſed within mud walls, was full as delightful as the moſt celebrated pleaſure-grounds in the kingdom. A copſe that bounded their domain, which in reality was pretty, and perhaps appeared the more ſo, becauſe it was the only thing like a wood that could be ſeen for miles, was viewed by both with equal rapture.

But as the romance of paſſion, according to the natural courſe of things, gradually declines,—for there is little to keep up its energy in the uneventful tenour of

domeſtic life,—inſenſibly the charms of Downton began to fade, particularly in the opinion of Mrs. Mourtray; and the increaſe of the family produced new wants and deſires.

Mourtray ſtill ſaid, and perhaps thought, he would not exchange it for the nobleſt ſeat in England; he allowed, however, it was a pity he had not a little money to beſtow upon it, for certainly the houſe wanted many repairs; and though he did not wiſh to give it a modern appearance, and ſtill leſs to fit it up like a citizen's villa, it would not be amiſs if the apartments could be rendered more comfortable, and be furniſhed in a ſtyle ſuitable to the building. The grounds, too, he thought capable of much improvement; at preſent, he muſt own, they looked rather forlorn and neglected.

But theſe regrets ſeldom eſcaped his lips, unleſs in very gloomy weather, or when

when ſomething had gone wrong in his farm: with an excellent underſtanding he poſſeſſed great equanimity of temper, and a quiet unconcernedneſs of mind, which made him rather inſenſible to ſlight inconveniences, little ſolicitous about trifles, and in general diſpoſed to be ſatisfied with every thing about him. His paſſions were not eaſily rouſed, but whatever object animated them invariably retained its hold; hence, after marriage, though he diſcovered Mrs. Mourtray was not exactly what he had painted her in his youthful imagination, he continued moſt tenderly attached to her, when he had ceaſed being in love.

Fond of agriculture, of which he underſtood the theory far better than the practical part; fond of elegant literature, and fond of muſic, he had a perpetual fund of amuſement in himſelf.

Too proud to ſeek ſociety with the great, from whom he would not receive favours that his narrow income precluded him from the poſſibility of returning; and too faſtidious to aſſociate with thoſe of his neighbours, who were rude and illiterate, with whom his feelings could not correſpond; or with others, whoſe pleaſures conſiſted in purſuits repugnant to his taſte, his ſociety was extremely confined; and he habituated himſelf to live as much as poſſible concentred in his family. His excurſions ſeldom extended beyond his farm; and as he diſliked the diverſions of the field, he was ſpared the expenſe of either dogs or horſes.

Mrs. Mountray, although ſhe perfectly concurred with him in lamenting their ſcanty fortune, would by no means have agreed with him in the mode of ſpending a larger one. She thought money might be far better employed than in repairing an old manſion ſeated in a wilderneſs, or

in improving grounds which nobody ever saw. The want of a carriage was one of the grievances she most severely felt, recollecting that, during her youth, she had the command of her uncle's; and though, immediately after her marriage, she had been perfectly satisfied with a *whisky*, drawn by an old blind horse, and perhaps would have been equally so in a covered cart, with her husband by her side; yet, in a short time, she longed for a more commodious vehicle, and would often say, if she had but a post-chaise, she should be completely happy. A pair of decent strong horses would (as she observed) not only do for farm work, but might occasionally be put into harness; and then they could sometimes make little trips from home, if only to amuse the children; these and a second-hand chaise would cost a mere trifle, and thus the dreary winter would be far more bearable, and they should not always be cooped up at home!

Mourtray's uſual reply to theſe and ſimilar obſervations, was a ſignificant ſhake of his head.

Her temper, diſpoſition, and inclinations, were exactly the reverſe of his. Trifling concerns were matters of importance with her, whilſt thoſe of real conſequence ſeemed only to glide over her mind; ſhe was in a perpetual hurry and buſtle about nothing at all, being incapable of attending to any ſerious occupation. Enjoying excellent health, with a large flow of ſpirits, ſhe was in her manners uncommonly young of her age; hence when love ceaſed to be the principal end of her exiſtence, ſhe felt with increaſing impatience the want of ſociety, and the being excluded from thoſe amuſements, which ſhe believed herſelf juſt as calculated to enjoy, as in the ſpring of life. Thoſe accompliſhments that ſhe once poſſeſſed, and which had full as much ſhare as her beauty in winning

ning her husband's heart, she had long neglected; "talents," as she said, "being wasted in a desart." Good natured and well meaning, she seldom acted wrong, because she had no temptation to do so; else she had so little command over herself, that she would have been in danger of erring, though she detested vice. Accustomed by Mourtray to be treated like a spoiled child, she frequently gave way, on very trivial occasions, to unavailing repinings; but, partly from the habit of hearing them, and partly from the peculiar frame of his temper, though they sometimes teazed for a moment, they gave him no material disturbance.

Every succeeding year, however, strengthened her motives of discontent, and even in some measure robbed him of his tranquillity; for every succeeding year, the narrowness of their income became more keenly felt. A large family of children embarrassed *her* only

for

for the time preſent, whilſt his anxiety in this reſpect anticipated the future.

But death in early infancy reduced this numerous family, and only two attained maturity; a ſon and daughter. The education of the former could not fail of being attended with a heavy expenſe; but Mourtray having had an excellent one himſelf, conſidered it as the moſt eſtimable of all advantages; and he curtailed many little luxuries, and even ſome neceſſaries,—in his family, firſt, to place his ſon Henry at Wincheſter College, and afterwards to maintain him decently at Oxford.

He was a wild lively youth, and though not abſolutely ungrateful to his father for the ſacrifices he made for his benefit, he was too averſe to ſtudy to profit by them. Perhaps his mother might in ſome meaſure have contributed to this indolence; he had always been her

her favourite; at home she never suffered him to be contradicted, unless when he opposed her will; and she often hinted, that she saw no reason why he should be hurried into any profession, as Downton one day must belong to him: this strange language was the more indiscreet, as she knew by experience that it was inadequate to the supply of her own wants. Henry, however, soon had sufficient sense to see the necessity of doing something, and he promised to study the law.

Mourtray himself undertook the education of his daughter, sensible that he was qualified for the task; for during that period of his life which he had passed in the army, instead of entering into scenes of riot and dissipation, as did many of his companions, he devoted all his leisure time to literary pursuits, and to the cultivation of his taste for music. He, therefore, played in a superior style on several instruments, had read a great deal, wrote

both

both correctly and elegantly, and, having an excellent memory, Emma became under his tuition highly accomplished: she had indeed such an aptitude for learning, that what he had undertaken from principle and neceſſity, he purſued from inclination. But the information ſhe received was very different from that acquired by the frivolous and very expenſive education in faſhion. Mourtray's firſt object was to inſtil into her tender mind, clear and ſound notions of religion and morality; and his ſecond, to enrich it with uſeful and elegant knowledge. Fond even as he was of muſic, he would not ſuffer her to devote too much time to it, ſo as to neglect more important acquiſitions; nevertheleſs, with her own genius and application, and his inſtructions, ſhe became a very tolerable proficient.

Chance, too, befriended her eager deſire of further improvement, particularly in regard to languages; for an emigrant French

French prieſt happened to wander to a ſmall market-town, only two miles from Downton: he was a man of letters, ſpoke and wrote his own language with the utmoſt purity, and perfectly underſtood all its refinements; he had likewiſe a thorough knowledge of geography, hiſtory, and natural philoſophy, with no inconſiderable ſkill in drawing.

The deplorable indigence to which he was reduced, obliged him to try and gain his livelihood by teaching French; but in ſuch an inſignificant place, ſo few perſons had either inclination or ability to pay the very ſmall recompenſe he required for his pains, that the poor man would probably have ſtarved, had not Mourtray engaged him to give his daughter leſſons; and M. Du Maſſon was too happy, to acquire ſuch a charming and intelligent little pupil.

From

From the time of his firſt introduction, he walked daily to Downton; his pay indeed was inconſiderable, but he frequently was invited to dinner, which in his circumſtances was very convenient; and as the family became better acquainted with him, he was ſometimes requeſted to paſs the night there, and even to ſtay ſeveral days when the weather was bad. It may eaſily be imagined, that Emma derived no ſmall advantage from theſe viſits.

Dancing was the only accompliſhment that neither of her preceptors were qualified to teach; and probably ſhe would not have acquired this in her childhood, but for the following circumſtance.

About three miles from Downton, there was a magnificent place called Wilmington Park, belonging to a nobleman, who, on Mourtray's ſettling at Downton, came to ſee him; and ſince that period, annual

viſits

viſits had been interchanged between them, though always with the utmoſt formality, and often without their meeting. The ladies had been ſtill leſs neighbourly, for Lady Wilmington made it a rule never to viſit the *natives*; though, as her lord kept a public day, it was underſtood in the country, that ſhe had on thoſe occaſions no objection to their company; but ſeveral declined profiting by her condeſcenſion; and, in numbers, the males far exceeded the females at her table.

Whether Mrs. Mourtray might not have been tempted to viſit at Wilmington on this footing, is uncertain; but her huſband ſettled the point, by proteſting ſhe ſhould not.

It happened once that the chapel at Wilmington was undergoing a thorough repair, which occaſioned the counteſs deigning to attend the ſervice at her pa-

riſh

riſh church; and as this was alſo that of Downton, ſhe ſaw there, for the firſt time, Mrs. Mourtray and the little Emma, then about ten years of age: the uncommon lovelineſs of the child ſtruck her the more, as ſhe had the greateſt predilection for beauty; and ſhe could not reſiſt ſtopping, as ſhe paſſed the Mourtray's pew in her way to the church-door, to notice Emma, as did likewiſe her two daughters, the youngeſt of whom, catching hold of her hand, proteſted ſhe muſt and ſhould go home with her. This Mourtray, with a ſmile, ſaid, was impoſſible. "And why ſo?" cried Lady Wilmington, whoſe raptures of admiration had not yet ſubſided; "and why ſo?" Then recollecting that ſhe had totally overlooked Mrs. Mourtray, though ſhe had courteſied to her huſband, ſhe added, turning to her with a gracious ſmile, though not directly addreſſing her, "Perhaps Mrs. Mourtray will have the goodneſs to indulge my little girl, and ſuffer

fer this ſweet child to go home with us?"

Mrs. Mourtray was very ready to conſent; not ſo Mr. Mourtray; he made objections: Lady Wilmington, piqued, would not have inſiſted; but Lady Bell, her daughter, ſo vehemently urged her requeſt, to which Emma timidly added her entreaties, that Mourtray yielded; and it was agreed, as the days were ſhort, that ſhe ſhould paſs the night at Wilmington; and that the young ladies and their governeſs ſhould carry her home in the coach the next morning.

This viſit was a moſt delightful event to Emma, and was followed by many others, to which Mourtray no longer objected; as, ſoon after the firſt, Lady Wilmington called in her curricle at Downton, where ſhe ſtaid at leaſt ten minutes.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mourtray haſtened to return her viſit, and ſhortly had the ſatisfaction of being invited to the next public dinner; to which ſhe went with her huſband, much againſt his inclinations. No further intimacy took place between the parents, but the children often met; and the counteſs having engaged an excellent dancing-maſter to ſtay ſome time in her houſe, ſhe propoſed, by way of inſpiring her daughters with emulation, that Emma ſhould ſhare with them in his inſtructions, in which Mr. and Mrs. Mourtray acquieſced. The former, however, was ſorry that circumſtances put it out of his power to have his daughter taught at home; not approving that ſhe ſhould often paſs a week or fortnight with perſons in a ſphere of life ſo different from that in which ſhe was deſtined to move.

Mrs. Mourtray was at firſt hurt at the little attention paid to herſelf by the Wilmington family; but cuſtom, in ſome mea-

measure, reconciled her to it; as the same mode of conduct, with little or no variation on their part, continued during several years. The news of their arrival in the country never failed putting her into an unpleasant bustle; and the old blind horse regularly dragged her to Wilmington the first fair morning afterwards, where, for the sake of her daughter, it happened to her sometimes to be admitted; but the behaviour of the ladies was so cold and unpleasant, that she always felt relieved when the visit was paid and returned.

To Mowbray's infinite satisfaction, she had long since declined attending the public dinners, not choosing to sport an old-fashioned wardrobe. To do her justice, however, she was disposed to overlook many personal mortifications for the sake of her daughter, who continued to be the favourite companion of the ladies Fontelieu (Lord Wilmington's daughters), till

till ſhe was near fifteen, when the family went to Ireland; and almoſt three years elapſed before they returned into —— ſhire.

Emma was tranſported with joy, when ſhe heard of the arrival of her friends; but it was of ſhort duration, for they did not ſeem at all diſpoſed to remember their former intimacy. The pretty child that had amuſed them was now become a moſt beautiful and accomplished young woman; this however they only knew by report; for although they had been ſome weeks in the country, various excuſes had been framed for neither viſiting nor receiving her.

A little ſketch of the Wilmington family may ſerve to elucidate their conduct.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE earl of Wilmington was, by birth and fortune, one of the perſons of the moſt conſequence in ——ſhire, where he was extremely jealous of maintaining entire his great parliamentary intereſt, and guarding it from encroachment: no other conſideration could induce him to paſs a few months every year in a place he deteſted.

His uſual time of quitting London was the end of Auguſt, when with an immenſe retinue, and every appendage of rank and opulence, but with an aching and reluctant heart, he repaired with his family, as averſe as himſelf, to vegetate (as they called it) at Wilmington Park. During four tedious months, which he thus ſacrificed to the grand object of his life, he courted popularity, and made a diſ-

play of hoſpitality, which was always obſerved to riſe or fall, in proportion as a general election was more or leſs near.

But amidſt his pomp, magnificence, and occaſional profuſion, ſome little meanneſs never failed to lurk; and cordiality, the zeſt of all entertainments, was wanting in his. Nobody ever gave him credit for true generoſity, or liberality of ſentiment; and when even he conferred a favour, it generally proved that he had his own intereſt in view.

One day a whole corporation would feaſt with him upon turtle, and be drunk with claret and Burgundy;—while the next he would anxiouſly watch the progreſs of a ſolitary bottle upon his table. One moment he would deſcant, with wonderful humanity, on the claims the lower orders of the community had on the opulent; and the next, ſecretly lecture his ſteward for giving away broken frag-

fragments of victuals to the poor of the village.—Thus by parſimony he counteracted his own purpoſes, and rarely ſucceeded in attaching heartily to his intereſt thoſe he wiſhed to gain.

Nor had he better ſucceſs in his attempts to appear gracious and condeſcending; for, though he had attained the talent of ſmiling on thoſe he hated, to a great degree of perfection, and by long habit an almoſt perpetual ſimper hovered on his lips, ſtill his native haughtineſs was more or leſs perceptible, in deſpite of all his efforts to conceal it. His dark ſcowling eyes rarely ventured to meet thoſe he addreſſed, becauſe he dreaded leſt they ſhould betray his thoughts, which often were exactly the reverſe of what his ſmooth courtly tongue expreſſed.

Indeed nothing could be more ridiculous than the ſet of phraſes he indiſcriminately uſed, when he wiſhed to carry a

point; for they were not only expreſſive of the higheſt opinion of others, but of the meekeſt notions of himſelf.

In town, all the time he did not devote to politics was paſſed in low and obſcure intrigues; but in the country he denied himſelf ſuch recreations, as the actions of ſo great a perſonage could not poſſibly be concealed; and theſe, however faſhionable in London, might, by the vulgar, be viewed in a light detrimental to his fancied popularity.—This was one of his reaſons for hating Wilmington; and another, which had nearly as much weight with him, was the enormous expenſe occaſioned by his reſidence there—ſhort as he contrived to make it.

Lady Wilmington, ſtill haughtier than her lord, but with at leaſt more openneſs of character, never attempted to aſſume humility.—She was of the firſt *ton* in every reſpect, and no greater penance could be impoſed

impoſed upon her, than preſiding at the entertainments policy induced him to give their country neighbours, whom ſhe conſidered as a race of beings, as totally diſtinct from herſelf and family, as cats, dogs, or monkeys.

Seated, in ſtate, at the head of her table, liſtleſs and languid, ſhe affected ill health, to avoid the trouble of ſpeaking to her gueſts, whoſe names ſhe ſeldom choſe to remember; but if neceſſity obliged her to addreſs them, ſhe had the happieſt knack imaginable at confounding one perſon with another; and then, as frequently this gave offence, her apology of "well, it is all the ſame, Mr. *this* or Mr. *that*," was not likely to remove it. If any thing ſtruck her fancy, which ſhe could not reſiſt communicating to her family, ſhe converſed with them in a ſort of cant language, unintelligible to the reſt of the company, whom ſhe ſuffered her daughters to *quiz*, but ſhe never joined in any of

their jokes, as theſe ſhe thought derogatory to her dignity.

Capricious, ill-tempered, and diſagreeable, as ſhe made herſelf, ſhe was not abſolutely ill-natured; and the very perſons ſhe thus treated, ſhe would, when in good humour, willingly have ſerved. With quick and lively parts, ſhe united a degree of judgment that ſeemed inconſiſtent with ſuch inordinate pride; and when ſhe choſe (which often happened when ſhe conſidered herſelf in her proper element, that is to ſay, amid the fine world) ſhe could be extremely agreeable. There her character for rigid virtue, honour, and integrity, was univerſally acknowledged. Her lord's meanneſs ſhe deteſted, and never failed to counteract it whenever it lay in her power; but his avarice often abridged her means: had theſe been greater, ſhe probably would have been generous, as munificence was, in her opinion,

nion, one of the attributes of illuſtrious birth.

The moſt perfect indifference ſubſiſted between herſelf and the earl, which, though ſhe was too ſincere to diſguiſe, yet, as the head of the family, ſhe invariably tried to ſupport his conſequence, as well as to live with him on decent terms, for the ſake of her children, and to maintain the dignity of her own character.

On the other hand, the earl, fond of diſſimulation, appeared in public as polite and attentive a huſband as he was the reverſe in private; though he ſecretly, at all times, ſtood in awe of her principles, and cautiouſly guarded from her knowledge thoſe actions which he knew would expoſe him to her animadverſions.

Lord and lady Wilmington had only one ſon and two daughters. Lord Fontelieu, the ſon, though in his twenty-third

year, was little known to the world, having received his education abroad, and at this time was upon his travels; but thoſe who had ſeen him when a boy, remembered him with partiality.

The daughters, lady Elizabeth and lady Iſabella Fontelieu, were much better known; both were thought beauties of the firſt claſs in their own family.—The former, now near one-and-twenty years of age, had been introduced into the world already ſome years; her pretenſions to beauty were founded on a very tall, ſtraight, and lean figure, without either grace or elegance; and on features perfectly regular, which never conveyed any other expreſſion than that of haughty ill-humour: large blue glaſſy eyes, a dead-white ſkin, and hair little differing from *that* in colour, compleated the aſſemblage of her charms. Yet, when dreſſed to advantage, and with the aid of *rouge*, at a diſtance ſhe appeared rather handſome.

In

In diſpoſition, ſhe inherited, in deeper ſhades, all lady Wilmington's defects, but with a very inferior underſtanding, and without any of her good or agreeable qualities.—Grave and reſerved, ſhe ſeldom relaxed from her ſtately manners, even in the boſom of her family.—Though ſhe had little affection for her mother, ſhe knew ſhe was admired by many, and, without diſcriminating wherefore, her behaviour ſhe made the model of her own.—But ſhe had not talents for imitation; and when ſhe attempted to double the part of her mother, ſhe equally failed in playing the great or the agreeable lady.—Therefore, neither in town nor country, neither with the old nor young, did ſhe gain favour; her father excepted. He loved her, becauſe he fancied ſhe reſembled him, and becauſe he conceived a portion of his own cunning, which he dignified by the name of wiſdom, lay hidden under her apparent reſerve.—That ſmall ſhare

of lady Wilmington's affection ſhe poſſeſſed, ſhe owed to the noble blood that flowed in her veins; an advantage which rendered all her children of a ſuperior caſt in her eyes. Both parents were equally aſtoniſhed, and herſelf ſtill more, that ſhe had not yet received a ſingle propoſal of marriage!

Lady Iſabella, two years younger than her ſiſter, made her *debut* in the world with much better ſucceſs. She was, indeed, accuſed of being too giddy and volatile, but ſhe appeared good natured and obliging.—People did not ſuſpect that, under this thoughtleſs appearance, ſhe concealed infinite art; and though at times ſhe gave offence by certain ſaucy airs and impertinence of manners, allowances were made for a very pretty girl, high in rank, ſpoiled by flattery, and with a prodigious flow of ſpirits, that it was ſuppoſed ſhe could not always command. —Hence her errors met with unuſual lenity

nity—ſuch was the captivation of her perſon.—Many men admired her, but only one or two had as yet ventured to think of her as a wife; their propoſals ſhe had laughed at in her heart, but her rejection had not been ungracious.

In a houſe where haughty reſerve ſeemed adopted as the order of the day, it is eaſy to imagine, that her lively affability, engaging manners, and enchanting ſmiles, muſt have made her many partizans: ſhe alone caſt a cheerful ray through the gloom which pervaded the reſt of the family; and her ſimple country neighbours never ſuſpected, whilſt ſhe was loading them with civilities, and liſtening with apparent intereſt to their long ſtories and dull domeſtic details, that ſhe was all the while, to uſe her own expreſſion, *quizzing* them.

Although ſhe had not a regular feature in her face, nobody perceived it till after

an attentive examination; becauſe, altogether, it was extremely agreeable, full of animation, and generally very merry, which favoured the diſplay of moſt beautiful teeth. — A charming complexion, with a luxuriance of fine hair, and a light elegant figure, rendered her juſtly an object of admiration.

She was her mother's particular favourite, who had, however, too much penetration not to ſee that ſhe had a turn for coquetry; and ſhe well knew that ſhe had a ſpirit impatient of reſtraint; but ſhe ſaw her foibles with the more indulgence, becauſe ſhe admired her perſon, and was often diverted by her gay humour.

Not ſo lord Wilmington:—accuſtomed to frequent women of a looſe deſcription, he thought ill of the ſex in general, and very early he ſaw in lady Iſabella's character ſuch cauſe of diſtruſt and ſuſpicion tha

that he inſiſted upon her having a governeſs; as her mother's ill, or pretended ill health, precluded the poſſibility of her being always with her daughters.—The governeſs was a French woman, ſtrongly recommended for the ſtrictneſs of her principles. She had no bright talents, which the earl thought ſo much the better, as ſhe would be the leſs likely to have the ſpirit of intrigue; and as he judged of her by himſelf, he endeavoured to ſecure her fidelity by magnificent promiſes of future liberality. Strange as it may appear, lady Iſabella's cunning and curioſity often kept him in alarm; for he knew, that, if by any unfortunate chance ſhe ſhould diſcover ſome of his actions that would not bear a ſcrutiny, ſhe would take infinite delight in revealing them.

During the period allotted for the reſidence of the family at Wilmington, they ſeldom invited many of their faſhionable friends to viſit them: the earl always found

ſome

ſome excuſe for denying himſelf the pleaſure of receiving them, well knowing that a country-houſe full of company, though very agreeable, is attended with no ſmall expenſe; and he ſuffered enough by *what* he impoſed upon himſelf, to further his views in the county.—Avarice and ambition inceſſantly ſtruggled in his breaſt: hence ſeldom any triumph was obtained by one paſſion, without inflicting a pang on the other.

Lady Wilmington, who lived much in the world when in town, was not ſorry, for a few months, to live with comparative quiet in the country: the young ladies, indeed, ſecretly murmured at being ſequeſtered from their acquaintance; but they had no voice in this matter.

Lord Wilmington having, by his Iriſh affairs, and other cauſes, been prevented for three years from making his annual journey to his weſtern eſtate, he judged it

it prudent to compenſate for his long abſence, by giving more frequent entertainments. — He had at this time ſeveral points at heart, and he thought nothing would more conduce to carry them, than giving a few balls.—In the firſt place, he hoped this favourite diverſion would win him the hearts of all the wives, mothers, and daughters, in the country; and theſe he valued merely becauſe they had, as he preſumed, no ſmall influence over the men.

And, ſecondly, he wiſhed extremely to marry his eldeſt daughter to a rich baronet lately come of age, whoſe anceſtors had always named one member for a neighbouring borough, and the Wilmington family the other; but by the earl's manœuvres, during Sir William Elliſton's (the young baronet) minority, he had contrived to circumvent his guardians, and bring in both members. Having heard that Sir William not only reſented this

uſurp-

uſurpation, but publicly declared his reſolution of ſupporting his rights at the next election, and had already begun canvaſſing with ſucceſs, he flattered himſelf, if he could draw him to theſe fêtes, that he might cajole him out of his purpoſe; and ſhould he not ſucceed in this, if he would marry lady Elizabeth (having higher views for her ſiſter) he did not in the leaſt doubt that he ſhould be able to diſpoſe of him as he pleaſéd.

He had no ſooner determined on this meaſure, than he haſtened to impart it to his family, though not the motives in which it originated, leaving the neceſſary preparations entirely to them; only recommending that the fêtes might be very ſhewy, yet conducted with the ſmalleſt expenſe poſſible.

The ladies Fontelieu were nearly overwhelmed with joy at theſe agreeable tidings; and now they bethought themſelves of

of Emma, who would be an excellent aſſiſtant in many little decorations that they reſolved inſtantly to ſet in hand.

The counteſs, who approved of their aſſociating Emma in this taſk, and who beſides had ſome curioſity to ſee her, ſent her carriage and a civil note to Mrs. Mourtray, to requeſt ſhe would permit her daughter to ſpend ſome days at Wilmington.

This was complied with to Emma's infinite ſatisfaction; and now ſhe aſcribed the late neglect of her friends entirely to the hurry and unſettled ſtate which ſhe imagined had attended their firſt arrival in the country, and was confirmed in this opinion by the flattering reception ſhe received, particularly from lady Iſabella, who ſeemed ready to devour her with careſſes.

Lady

Lady Wilmington could ſcarcely believe her eyes when ſhe ſaw Emma; for, pretty as ſhe had ever thought her, ſhe had no idea of finding her now become a perfect beauty, and could not help regretting, that ſo many charms ſhould be beſtowed on an inſignificant country girl.

The earl was gone to town, that he might not (as he ſaid) be diſturbed in his important avocations by the arrangements making for the fête; and he only intended returning home the day before the firſt ball.

As the ladies Fontelieu had imagined, they derived conſiderable aſſiſtance from Emma's taſte and ingenuity: ſhe invented a thouſand pretty devices to ornament the ball and ſupper rooms, her needle and pencil being employed for this purpoſe with the greateſt perſeverance; troubling

troubling herſelf little with preparations for her own appearance; ſhe had, indeed, no clothes that were otherwiſe than extremely plain and ſimple; yet, with her fine figure, whatever ſhe wore always appeared to advantage; and her natural good taſte taught her to fold her charming hair round her head, in imitation of antique buſts and medals, in the moſt becoming manner poſſible.

The Counteſs, however, choſe on this occaſion that all the young people ſhould wear an uniform; and, under pretence that Emma might not be able to procure exactly the ſame materials as thoſe uſed for this purpoſe in her family, ſhe preſented her with a complete dreſs, which was thankfully accepted, and thereby relieved Mrs. Mourtray from one of thoſe petty diſtreſſes that had agitated her exceedingly for ſome time; ſhe remained, however, diſſatisfied, upon the whole, with

lady

lady Wilmington, for the little notice ſhe had taken of her; but ſhe would not, for this reaſon, puniſh herſelf by declining the invitations ſhe received, in common with all the reſt of the neighbourhood, to attend the approaching feſtivity.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

ON the day appointed for the firſt ball, the Downton family repaired to Wilmington; even Mourtray, at his darling Emma's intreaties, conſented to be of the party: their arrival, owing to the fidget and hurry of Mrs. Mourtray, was ſomewhat premature; for the earl was yet at table, and the lamps and candles were not lighted above ſtairs.

Lady Wilmington, thus ſurpriſed, was by no means in good humour: ſhe very coolly ſaluted the party; lady Elizabeth followed her example; and lady Iſabella, who might have countenanced them, had retired to dreſs. Mourtray already wiſhed himſelf at home, blaming the weakneſs that had induced him, contrary to his better judgment, to mix with people who had ſo little cordiality in their diſpoſition.

ſition. Mrs. Mourtray found occupation in admiring the fanciful ornaments of the ſaloon; and Emma in anticipating, in imagination, the pleaſures to come.

The arrival of more company took off from the reſtraint and formality that had hitherto prevailed; and the unanimous applauſe beſtowed on the elegant appearance of the apartments reſtored lady Wilmington to good humour.

She now condeſcended not only to regard Emma with approbation, but to acknowledge that her ſkill and ingenuity had, in ſome degree, contributed to transform her houſe into a fairy palace.

It was not till after the dancing had begun that lord Wilmington made his appearance: when he arrived, his daughters and Emma were performing a reel, to the great admiration of the whole company. Mixed in the crowd, he remained a ſi-

a ſilent ſpectator; but no ſooner was the dance over, than, taking lady Iſabella aſide, he enquired who had made the third in the reel. If he felt any ſurpriſe at the alteration a few years had made in Emma, he did not expreſs it; but haſtening to ſeek Mourtray, in guarded but very flattering terms, he congratulated him on having ſo lovely a daughter.

Sir William Elliſton, the ſecret object of the *fête*, did not arrive till a very late hour: heavy and inanimate, without grace or vivacity, he was not likely to add to its luſtre, or to gain favour in the eyes of the ladies. Lady Elizabeth choſe not to comprehend her father's hints to be particularly civil, but avoided him with marked diſlike. Lady Iſabella felt no other inclination than to laugh at him; and Emma had the choice of ſo many partners, that ſhe never was at liberty to dance with him when he aſked her.

He ſeemed more diſpoſed to admire her, than either of the ladies Fontelieu; but when he underſtood ſhe had no fortune, he very prudently ceaſed to notice her.

Lord Wilmington, who attentively watched all his motions, finding one of his ſchemes would prove abortive, became doubly anxious to ſucceed in the other: to this end, after ſupper, where Champagne had not been ſpared, he contrived to draw ſir William into a corner, and began to ply him with fine ſpeeches, repeatedly mentioning his late worthy father, his moſt valuable friend, never enough to be lamented; yet fortunate in having left a repreſentative, that promiſed to be exactly like himſelf, with whom he hoped to have the honour of living as good neighbours ought to do.

Sir William, who had liſtened with his eyes wider open than uſual, finding at length

length that the Earl was ſilent, very coolly ſaid, that it was the firſt time he had heard that ever his Lordſhip and his father had been in habits of intimacy.

"O! we were the beſt friends in the world; on all occaſions drew together; never had but one opinion between us, my dear ſir."

"Then it is the more extraordinary," drily obſerved the Baronet, "that ſo dear a friend of my father's ſhould have put his ſon under the neceſſity of aſſerting his long eſtabliſhed rights!"

"I will convince you in one moment," cried Lord Wilmington, "that what I did in regard to —— was with the pureſt and beſt of motives; all for your good, upon my honour; but let me explain . . . . . "

The dancers at this inſtant ſeparating the gentlemen, Sir William, without waiting for the explanation, walked out of the room, where he appeared no more.

Lord Wilmington, provoked beyond all imagination to be foiled by a young man, whoſe ſtupid look had encouraged him to believe he would be a fit ſubject to work upon; and ſorely vexed to have been at ſo much expenſe for ſo little purpoſe, no longer took any ſhare in the general feſtivity; revolving in his mind all the torments of a future conteſted election. Part of his chagrin, however, he vented on Lady Elizabeth; whom he pretended had, by her ill-timed airs, diſguſted a perſon, whoſe acquaintance, ſhe knew, he was very deſirous of cultivating.

As, in fact, this was the firſt intimation he had in direct terms given her of it, ſhe warmly defended herſelf; and artfully

fully insinuated, that probably he had heard some unguarded jokes her sister had passed upon him. This turned the Earl's anger into another channel; but he was forced to smother it, as Lady Isabella, who was flying here and there, never two instants in the same place, gave him no opportunity of venting it; and, in despite of his ill humour, the ball was kept up with great spirit till a very late hour.

Emma, who had never seen any thing of the kind before, had been by far the happiest person present; and she alone, of all the female guests, was retained at Wilmington, because she danced to perfection; and was, besides, of so much use to the young ladies.

The second ball was to take place on the third day after the first; as Lord Wilmington wisely considered, that, by making the interval so short, much that was

prepared for the former would do for the latter.

Amongſt thoſe who continued, as well as Emma, inmates at Wilmington, was a young man, heir to a title and eſtate in the county; but at preſent, being dependent on his mother, was kept by her on a very ſlender allowance; his name was Sydney, and his exterior was by no means in his favour, for he was ſo very plain, that Lady Iſabella ſurnamed him *the fright*: in figure, however, he was tolerable, and had perfectly the air of a gentleman. But after the firſt *coup d'œil* was over, it was impoſſible to think him very ugly, for goodneſs and intelligence were ſtrongly marked on his countenance; and as he danced admirably, even Lady Iſabella, at laſt, began to think him leſs hideous.

Emma, with a light heart, free from all art or deſign, and only wiſhing to enjoy

as fully as poſſible, the preſent moment, was particularly delighted to be his partner; and though he behaved with the moſt exact attention to all the young ladies, he ſeemed to chooſe her by preference.

The ſecond ball proved ſtill more agreeable than the firſt; and Lord Wilmington did not at all lament, after what he had ſeen of Sir William Elliſton, that he did not appear at it.

Emma now returned to Downton; but ſhe continued, during the whole autumn, a frequent gueſt at Wilmington. The ladies Fontelieu, eſpecially Lady Iſabella (or, as ſhe was more commonly called in her own family, Lady Bell), found infinite reſources in their intimacy with the accompliſhed Emma, to which the Counteſs did not object; though ſhe took due care to impreſs her mind with a proper ſenſe of her great condeſcenſion, in thus diſtin-

guiſhing her from the herd of *native miſſes*. Still her favour did not extend to Mrs. Mourtray, who, ſhe ſaid, ſhe believed to be a mighty good ſort of a body, but very heavy in hand.

It may eaſily be imagined that a young lively girl like Emma had not ſufficient experience to diſcern how little cauſe ſhe had to be flattered by this preference; which gratified her, becauſe it procured her a thouſand amuſements unattainable at home. Indeed, both Lady Wilmington and Lady Elizabeth rather inſpired her with awe and reſpect, than with any warm degree of affection; but Lady Bell's ſhew of fondneſs wrought on her unſuſpicious mind, and ſhe felt convinced of the friendſhip of a perſon, whom ſhe viewed with admiration. With a heart diſpoſed to overflow with gratitude for every attention ſhewn her, ſhe loved her with that fervour of youth, which ardently ſeeks ſome object on whom to laviſh thoſe affections,

much

much warmer at her age and in her ſituation than afterwards, when they ſeldom fail being impaired by a commerce with the world. So many cauſes, therefore, attracting her to Wilmington, inſenſibly ſhe acquired a taſte for company; and a diſlike, which ſhe ſcarcely dared to acknowledge even to herſelf, to the dull ſameneſs of Downton.

Since ſhe had been admitted into the ſociety of her *fine* neighbours, the little excurſions ſhe occaſionally made with her mother in the one-horſe-chaiſe had quite a different effect upon her to what they had formerly; then they uſed to be contrived and executed to her no ſmall ſatisfaction; but now, to jig along for miles over the bleak downs, with her hair blowing about her ears; to meet, at the end of ſuch penance, people who lived quite out of the world, who had no other topics of converſation than the uninterelting occurrences of their own do-

meſtic concerns, or the repetition of ſtale news, was extremely diſtaſteful to her.

Therefore, from the time Lord Wilmington's carriage brought her home, till it returned to convey her back to Wilmington, her whole thoughts centered there; for there alone ſhe ſeemed to live.

Mrs. Mourtray could not fail of obſerving what paſſed in her daughter's mind, but ſhe indulgently excuſed it; ſenſible, that ſince ſhe who was ſo much older, and whoſe retirement originally had been voluntary, too often found it very irkſome, it muſt be infinitely more ſo to a young perſon in the bloom of eighteen.

Mourtray, though deſirous that his Emma ſhould join to the more eſſential virtues the grace of poliſhed manners, did

did not thoroughly approve her living ſo much with people from whom ſhe would be too apt to imbibe a turn for diſſipation and extravagance, with a multitude of deſires, that could not poſſibly be gratified; but when he conſidered that their ſtay in the country never exceeded a few months, and that then ſhe muſt reſume her former way of life, he doubted whether it would not be an unjuſtifiable cruelty to oppoſe viſits that ſeemed to make her ſo happy, and which were attended with little expenſe: the ladies at Wilmington not thinking it worth while to take much pains about their appearance in the article of dreſs; ſimplicity, therefore, was the faſhion there.

Sydney's birth and future conſequence recommended him to Lord and Lady Wilmington's notice: he was preſſed to repeat his viſits to them as often as he choſe; and he was happy to make them frequent, attracted to Wilmington by the

hopes of meeting Emma, whoſe beauty, modeſty, and talents, had made an impreſſion, never to be effaced, on his mind. The ladies Fontelieu he regarded with no other ſentiment than profound reſpect.

Lady Elizabeth, however, to the aſtoniſhment of all who knew her, deſcended from the pinnacle of pride, on which ſhe had fixed her ſtation, to be civil and courteous to him; her grave reſerve melted into gay frankneſs at his approach, and ſhe would freely converſe, and even laugh with him. The quiet of the country gave her leiſure for reflection: reluctantly ſhe ſometimes owned to herſelf, that ſhe had not hitherto (as ſhe had once expected) ſeen all the fine men of the *ton* at her feet. Sydney's birth was not much inferior to her own; his mother might enlarge his income; it would, therefore, be no diſgrace to her to marry him; and if ſhe condeſcended to beſtow her handſome perſon on his ugly one, ſhe ſhould lay him under

under such an obligation, that, with his goodness of heart and sweetness of temper, would induce him to be the meekest and most submissive of husbands.

In consequence of this plan she sought to allure him, by detailing to him what, in her opinion, was most valuable,—her great connections, her father's immense wealth, and the influence he had with government; which might so advantageously be employed in favour of any person whom he esteemed.

These hints, and others still more intelligible, being invariably received by him with the coldest indifference, as if it were impossible he could in any way be concerned in them, she totally altered her manner, and relapsed into her wonted haughtiness.

The whole of Lady Elizabeth's behaviour to Sydney, with all its variations,

afforded infinite diverſion to lady Bell; though, on better acquaintance, ſhe often acknowledged that *the fright*, when not in a ſententious mood, could be very agreeable. Her quick penetration ſoon made her diſcover, that he ſecretly felt a decided preference to Emma; this ſhe conſidered as a dreadful impeachment on his taſte: had he ſhewn the leaſt partiality to herſelf, ſhe would have ridiculed it as a monſtrous preſumption in a man with ſuch a face; though ſhe might have amuſed herſelf, whilſt in the country, for want of better ſport, with flirting with him. At length ſhe ſettled, in her own mind, that it would be a very good joke to turn his head, and eaſy to efface the ſlight impreſſion Emma might have made upon his heart; but ſhe had too much confidence in her charms to call to their aſſiſtance ſuch auxiliaries as her ſiſter had employed. Each day ſhe tried to fix his attention, by the diſplay of ſome beauty which might have eſcaped his notice: ſhe drop-

dropped her clog, when walking with him, that he might put it on; ſhe caught her fine hair in the buſhes, that he might extricate it; ſometimes ſhe could not pull on her gloves without his aid. Then, in converſation, ſhe adapted herſelf to his humour; became ſentimental, and reſtrained her natural vivacity. In ſhort, ſhe practiſed a thouſand arts to enſnare the heart of a man, who was perfectly indifferent to her, merely by way of temporary amuſement!

Although this conduct might have ſucceeded with ſome men, it had no other effect on Sydney, than to fill him with diſguſt: reſpect and politeneſs, indeed, obliged him to diſguiſe this; but as his diſpoſition was remarkably frank and ſincere, he could not always prevent his countenance from betraying his feelings.

Lady

Lady Bell, however, ſoon grew weary, when ſhe found ſhe could not touch the heart of *the fright*; but, leſs piqued than her ſiſter, never having had any ſerious views, ſhe continued, after ſhe had dropped her deſign, to treat him with a good-humoured familiarity.

Emma, young and inexperienced, had comprehended little of theſe manœuvres of her friends, though ſhe had ſometimes thought Lady Bell too free in her manner towards Sydney; but this ſhe attributed to giddineſs, the only defect ſhe could perceive in her.

Of Sydney's ſentiments in regard to herſelf, ſhe entertained but a vague ſuſpicion; nor did ſhe trouble herſelf about the matter. She liked him, as a pleaſant, intelligent acquaintance, and eſteemed the good qualities ſhe diſtinguiſhed in his character; but ſhe ſeldom allowed him a place in her thoughts.

Con-

Content and happy to be under the ſame roof with her, ſhe was the only object Sydney ſaw or liſtened to with intereſt: too conſcious that his perſon was not formed to inſpire love, he had no ſort of wiſh to explain his feelings to her; thinking it but too probable, that ſhe would not liſten to him with complacency. Yet, though he ſcarcely dared to indulge the fainteſt hope that ever he ſhould touch her heart, he could not perſuade himſelf to make any efforts to conquer a paſſion, that, in its infancy, is attended with ſo much pleaſure; and he thought, if once he could eſtabliſh himſelf firmly in her good opinion, it was not impoſſible that ſhe might in time (having ſo excellent an underſtanding) overlook his perſonal diſadvantages, and be prevailed upon to accept his hand when his own ſituation might embolden him to offer it to her.

Her want of fortune gave him infinite satisfaction, as he should have an opportunity of proving the disinterestedness of his affection; and her retired life in the country not only delighted him, because he should have the fewer rivals to encounter, but also because she would be the more likely to retain that purity and simplicity of character which he adored still more than her beauty.

One thought alone disturbed his present happiness; this was, by what means he should gain access to her, after the departure of the family from Wilmington. His own abode, though in the same county, was at a great distance from Downton, where he had never visited, nor been encouraged to do so, conformably to the rule Mourtray had adopted concerning visiting; and unless he were prematurely to declare his views, contrary to his wishes, he saw no pretence that he

he could frame for intruding upon the Mourtrays.

He lived alone at a farm-houſe belonging to his mother, Lady Clannarmon, where a few rooms were fitted up for his uſe: ſhe was his only female relation, and reſided at Florence; but had ſhe been in England, ſhe could not, for reaſons too well known to himſelf, have been of any uſe to him on this occaſion.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

THE time now approached which the Wilmington family had fixed for their departure from the country. Emma was making them a farewell visit, and sincerely grieving at the severe loss she should experience by their absence; whilst the ladies Fontelieu, so far from sharing in her regrets, were incessantly enumerating all the pleasures that awaited them in town.

Their conversation now turned on no other subjects than public places, or in discussions on fashions; and their invention was already busily employed in preparations for a brilliant appearance on the ensuing birth-day.

Emma, with a half-stifled sigh, listened to subjects so foreign to her views and pursuits;

purſuits; her imagination all the while ſtrongly contraſting the different ſcenes and occupations that awaited her, during a ſolitary winter to be paſſed at Downton.

Lady Elizabeth, ſhrewdly ſuſpecting what was paſſing in her mind, indulged herſelf in dwelling with more than ordinary glee on theſe matters, having been extremely piqued that Sydney, the night before he left Wilmington, when they had a little *impromptu* ball, had not once aſked her to dance, but had contrived twice to get Emma for his partner. To be revenged, therefore, on the perſon who had cauſed this abominable ſlight, ſhe reſolved to tantalize her with fine deſcriptions of fêtes; at ſome of theſe, ſhe inſinuated, ſhe had been the object of general homage; men in town knowing how to diſtinguiſh people; and, ſhe added, that her ſtyle of dreſs never failed to be

imitated

imitated by all fashionable young women.

Lady Bell, little disposed to allow of the superiority which she thus arrogated to herself, burst into a provoking fit of laughter, which so enraged her sister, as she could not prove what she had advanced, that, to get rid of the subject, she suddenly affected a kind consideration for Emma, in whose presence she said, "it was cruel to talk of things quite out of her line!"

Lady Bell congratulated her on the sudden turn her disposition had taken to thus delicately to spare the feelings of others.

Lady Elizabeth, without deigning a reply, turning to Emma, said, "You must often have observed, Miss Mourtray, that my sister deals much in irony, mistaking

taking it for wit; and as ſhe never ſpares it on any occaſion, though ſhe only came out laſt winter, ſhe managed, before the end of it, to affront half of our acquaintance."

"No ſuch thing," retorted Lady Bell: "My maxim is, laugh when I can; be ſerious when I muſt; and people are much leſs offended with jokes, which, if they have wit, they can return, and if they have not, they don't comprehend, than at dull importance, that ſeems diſdainfully to look down upon all the world."

"Very fine, Ma'am!—and as I have no inclination to deſcend, ſo as to enter the liſts with you, I leave you to enjoy your fancied wit!" Then, riſing with more than uſual ſtate, Lady Elizabeth left the room.

Lady

Lady Bell, accuſtomed to theſe ſiſterly diſputes, exclaimed as ſhe ſhut the door, "How I do delight in making my ſolemn ſiſter angry! Poor thing! She did not take at all, I aſſure you: the men ſay ſhe is as ſtiff as a poker; and the women are afraid of her, ſhe is ſo proud and prudiſh."

"Huſh, dear Lady Bell," cried Emma; "Conſider, you are ſpeaking of your ſiſter; and why ſhould you delight in vexing her?"

"Becauſe her pride is inſufferable: but never aſk me to account for motives; mine are always determined by the impulſe of the moment."

"This may not always be ſafe," ſaid Emma, ſhaking her head.

"Hang reflection! I cannot, however, ſo entirely diſmiſs it, as not to feel miſerable,

miſerable, my ſweet Emma, that your cruel fate will not ſuffer you to mix amongſt us: my heart bleeds to think, that, while I am flying from operas to balls, from concerts to aſſemblies, you will be moping over the fire with *papa* and *mamma*, and ſcarcely ever ſee a human being, except the fat parſon of the pariſh."

"No, I ſhall not be moping over the fire; for, by your ladyſhip's account of London hours, I ſhall be in my firſt ſleep long before your amuſements begin."

"Lord! how ſtupid I ſhould die if I went to bed before I had quite tired myſelf with racketing about."

And then, as Emma was on the point of returning home, Lady Bell renewed her aſſurances of unalterable affection; and that, on her return, ſhe would amuſe her with an exact account of her proceedings

ceedings in London; "For I muſt not write to you," ſaid ſhe; "Mamma won't let me; ſhe ſays ſhe hates correſponding *miſſes*."

Emma ſcarcely heard her laſt words; her heart was too full of ſorrow at parting with lady Bell, on the ſincerity of whoſe friendſhip ſhe placed perfect reliance. The farewell ſhe received from the reſt of the family was ſhort and civil, and ſhe endeavoured to appear compoſed; but when the chaiſe that conveyed her home drove through the great gates, at the Park Lodge, for the laſt time, ſhe felt a ſenſation of deſpondency that all her efforts could not ſhake off.

A thick fog that morning enveloped Downton; nothing was to be ſeen clearly, except the tops of the tall diſmal firs; the houſe, propped up on one ſide, looked, when ſhe was near enough to diſtinguiſh it, deſolate and neglected; many of the windows

windows were ſhut up, and from one or two chimnies only aroſe any ſmoke.—Inſtead of a hall, with a large blazing fire, full of ſmart well-dreſſed ſervants, which ſhe had juſt left, ſhe entered a cold damp place, more like a lumber-room than a hall, and did not ſee a ſoul, but Peter, the foot-boy, with lank greaſy hair, in an old ſhabby frock, with a leather apron tied before him, who left off cleaning his knives to run and open the door.

"Maſter he be out," cried Peter, with a broad grin, "but miſtreſs be at home, and deadly glad ſhe'll be to ſee you, Miſs."

Mrs. Mourtray, after tenderly ſaluting her, reſumed her occupation, which was, with the aſſiſtance of her maid, cutting out linen: a large quantity lay, piled up in heaps, which Emma ſurveyed with a ſorrowful eye, well knowing that, in the

dull labour of making it, ſhe ſhould be employed many a long evening, and of late ſhe had learned to deteſt all needle-work of the notable kind.

At length the maid was diſmiſſed, and Mrs. Mourtray, having leiſure to view her daughter, was alarmed at the alteration ſhe perceived in her countenance.

" Bleſs me!" cried ſhe, " why, ſurely, you are ill!"

Emma aſſured her of the contrary, and that ſhe was only a little out of ſpirits at leaving Wilmington, where ſhe had been ſo happy, and at parting with friends, whoſe goodneſs ſhe never ſhould forget.

" Poor thing!" ſaid Mrs. Mourtray, " I am ſure I am ſorry for you, for you will paſs a dull time here. I think the place is quite altered, for my part: I did not find the winters formerly ſo very diſ-

agreeable;

agreeable; but now, your father is always either out, attending to his farm, or engaged at chefs with Du Maffon: fometimes he even plays in the morning."

"I am glad he has found fomething," faid Emma, "to amufe and occupy him."

"Yes; but it is very dull for me; however, now you are come, all will be well: I thought thofe great ladies never intended to fend you back, but meant to keep you with them."

Emma formed half a wifh that they had done this; but fhe curbed it, as ungrateful to her mother. Mourtray, and her old preceptor, came in together juft before dinner: fhe made an effort to look cheerful, for fhe doated on her father, who was the moft kind and indulgent of parents. But after a little chat with him and Du Maffon, on different fubjects, fhe

relapſed into melancholy; trying to perſuade herſelf, that this was ſolely cauſed by the loſs of Lady Bell's company; and being, for a little while, alone with Mr. Mourtray, ſhe could not refrain from lamenting her departure; "For you cannot imagine, papa," continued ſhe, "how very agreeable ſhe is, nor how fond ſhe is of me."

"That ſhe can be agreeable, I readily conceive," replied Mourtray, "but as to her fondneſs of you, that is not quite ſo clear."

"Good heaven, papa! how can you ſay ſo? If ſhe does not love me, why ſhould ſhe pretend it, and why ſhould ſhe be ſo anxious to have me for ever at Wilmington?"

"One anſwer will ſerve for both queſtions;—becauſe ſhe wants you."

"How

"How is that poſſible?"

"Yes, ſhe does; the ſociety at Wilmington, except on particular days, is always the ſame; ſhe has nobody of her own age to amuſe her, for her ſiſter is too grave; but you are young and lively."

"So then," ſaid Emma, a little diſcontented, "my uſe is merely to amuſe her?"

"Certainly; for if you were in town, ſhe would conſider you as nobody, becauſe ſhe can find many there, who would better anſwer her purpoſe."

"Indeed, papa, I am ſure you are miſtaken; Lady Bell is always wiſhing I could be in town when ſhe is there."

"Ay; ſo ſhe tells you; but fine ladies are ſometimes inſincere; and I

much ſuſpect that Lady Bell would notice Emma Mourtray very little, unleſs ſhe could make a figure equal to herſelf."

"There is little chance of that," ſaid Emma, with a ſigh, "or that ever I ſhall ſee London; but, I own, it would mortify me very much to find Lady Bell different there from what ſhe is in the country; and excuſe me, papa, for doubting that a perſon can be capricious, who is ſo remarkably good natured."

"My dear girl, when you are older, theſe ſort of changes," ſaid Mourtray, "will appear leſs wonderful, and ſcarcely affect you; for you will be prepared to meet them."

"Age, then, is ſtill worſe than I thought it," ſaid Emma; "for to live in conſtant diſtruſt would be more diſagreeable to me than gray hairs, or wrinkles."

"Conſtant

"Conſtant diſtruſt can only be felt by bad minds; but youthful ones ſhould not form too warm attachments till they have diſcovered *more* than agreeable qualities, or even good nature; for theſe *alone*, take my word for it, Emma, form a very inſecure baſis to friendſhip."

The converſation here dropped; and Emma, at her father's requeſt, took her ſeat at the piano forte, and ſoon played herſelf into better ſpirits.

The obſervations Mourtray had made on Lady Bell had not, indeed, been much in her favour; but he had more in view than merely to guard his daughter from being duped by the ſemblance of friendſhip: having obſerved, not without uneaſineſs, her extreme ſuſceptibility of firſt impreſſions, his chief object was to warn her againſt giving way to them too lightly; but no caution of this kind

has much effect; experience alone being able to rectify the errors of misjudging youth.

Mourtray did not again refume the fubject: he was, in general, averſe to every diſcourſe that had the leaſt reſemblance to a lecture; and having performed his duty, in admoniſhing his beloved Emma, he gave himſelf no further concern, but left matters to take their own courſe.

Mrs. Mourtray now ſtrove, as much as poſſible, to find amuſement, as well as employment, for Emma: with the former ſhe affected to appear pleaſed, to gratify her mother, and performed the latter with her uſual diligence; but, with real ſatisfaction and apparent cheerfulneſs, ſhe renewed her ſtudies with Du Maſſon and her father, though ſtill her thoughts often wandered to the Wilmington family,

mily, and ſhe ſecretly ſighed for the pleaſures ſhe ſuppoſed them enjoying.

No wonder, then, that the gloomy months of a very ſevere winter appeared to her more inſupportable than ever: formerly, not being of an age to mix in the world, of which ſhe knew nothing, her ſecluſion from it had not ſtruck her as a hardſhip; but now ſhe recollected, that Lady Bell was only a few months older than herſelf, and ſhe felt that the only obſtacle which prevented her appearing in the ſame brilliant circles as did her friend, and having her ſhare of admiration, was the narrow fortune of her father.

Inſenſibly, and without being thoroughly conſcious to what extent, ſhe had imbibed, at Wilmington, notions of grandeur and ambition, which never would have entered her head had ſhe not lived ſo much with perſons of the moſt

worldly caſt: mixed with theſe was a little vanity, originally the only weed that had ſprung up in a mind, in which bloomed a thouſand native virtues; and this baneful plant, though cruſhed, as much as poſſible, by her father, had too often been foſtered by her fond, but weak mother: lately, too, it had gained ſtrength by the compliments ſhe had received from almoſt all the men ſhe had ſeen at the balls, where her beauty far ſurpaſſed that of all others preſent.

Indeed, nothing more lovely could be imagined than was her countenance, nor any thing more perfect than her form: her features, without being ſtrictly regular, were beautifully turned; her large dark eyes were full of ſpirit and ſweetneſs, and her figure was ſo juſtly and elegantly proportioned, that ſhe ſeemed fit to ſerve as the model of one of the Graces. The colour of her eyes and hair, with the circumſtance of her name according

cording ſo well with Prior's Emma, induced her father often to call her his nut-brown maid; but her ſkin, though brown, was clear, and animated with the pureſt red.

CHAP. V.

THE exceſſive inclemency of the weather, added to the roads rendered impaſſable by heavy falls of ſnow, debarred the Mourtray family from even the ſlight intercourſe they had, in general, with their neighbours. Nothing, therefore, interrupted the dull uniformity of their way of life: each day the morning domeſtic occupations were the ſame; the walk on the downs, when a favourable gleam of ſunſhine appeared, was repeated; the ſame party met at dinner, unfurniſhed with any new topics of converſation; and the only circumſtance which exhilarated their ſpirits in the evening, was the arrival of the letters and newſpapers, which an old infirm man in the village walked ſome miles each day to fetch: he generally arrived about ſix o'clock,

and

and this hour was always expected with impatience.

One evening, about the end of February, a freſh fall of ſnow had prevented his making his uſual diſpatch: Mourtray, though of a phlegmatic diſpoſition, ſeemed a little impatient at this delay; his wife fretted; and his daughter ran out every five minutes to aſk if nothing was come; nothing, indeed, was expected, except the newſpapers; but the value of theſe can only be known by people, who, like this family, have been confined in the country during a long dreary winter. Under ſuch circumſtances, the arrival of one of theſe precious ſheets is an important event, and it is devoured with greedy eyes and ears.

But when the clock ſtruck eight, Mourtray, almoſt hopeleſs of learning, by the uſual channel of information, what was paſſing in the world, ſought conſola-

tion

tion by ſitting down to cheſs with Du Maſſon, whom he had detained at Downton during the laſt week; and he ordered Peter to ſtep into the village, and enquire what was become of the letter-carrier.

While the cheſs players, abſorbed in their game, kept a profound ſilence, Mrs. Mourtray, having now relieved herſelf, by wondering "how this could happen? what could poſſeſs old Andrew to ſtay ſo late?" and next, by conjectures on the ſort of event that might have retarded the papers' departure from London, betook herſelf to ſome plain work.

She had been long enough engaged in this, to fall nearly aſleep over it, and only kept her eyes open by frequent applications to her ſnuff-box; which, in all her little troubles, ſhe viewed as the firſt of all comforts.

All

All this time Emma, conſidering this evening as more peculiarly under the influence of dulneſs than any other yet had been, quietly reſigned herſelf to what ſhe could not mend; and fetching her muſic-book, ſhe began copying into it ſome opera-dances Lady Bell had lent her when ſhe left Wilmington. Whilſt her pen traced the notes, her fancy was tracing the paths of pleaſure that, probably, her friend was treading, and contraſting the difference of their ſituations.

Not one ſyllable had been heard in the parlour for above an hour and a half, excepting *check*; when the ſtillneſs was ſuddenly broken, by Peter's voice pacifying the houſe-dog as he entered the hall.

This ſound rouſed Mrs. Mourtray out of a ſlumber into which ſhe had fallen: "Bleſs me!" cried ſhe, ſtarting up, "here's the poſt at laſt!"

To

To this exclamation her husband, who happened at that moment to be under no small anxiety for the fate of his *queen*, contented himself by answering with a nod.

But Emma, whose motions were like lightning, had already anticipated the entrance of Peter into the parlour, whom she had flown to meet in the hall, and now appeared with the much wished-for packet in her hand.

"Andrew is safe and well, papa," cried she; "but the snow is so deep, the poor man could not find his way; and he would probably have remained on the downs all night, if Peter had not luckily found him, and brought him here with him."

A second nod from Mr. Mourtray.

"Shall

" Shall I go and order ſomething warm to be given to the poor creature?" aſked Emma of her mother, no longer thinking of any thing but old Andrew; " for, indeed, he ſeems half frozen."

" Ring the bell; but, firſt hold the paper to the fire, child; and as I hope this game of cheſs is almoſt over, you will have time to read it to us before ſupper."

"Peter does not hear the bell, mamma: had I not better go myſelf?"

" Why in ſuch a hurry? Let me firſt juſt ſkim over the paper."

While ſhe was doing this, Emma flew to give directions that great care might be taken of Andrew; and when ſhe returned, ſhe reminded her mother that there were two letters: " they are both," ſaid ſhe, " for my father, and one of them has

has a great black ſeal: what can that mean?"

"A black ſeal! oh, mercy! it certainly is ſome bad news about Henry. Do, for God's ſake, Mr. Mourtray, let your game alone, and open your letters."

Again Mr. Mourtray nodded, but quite mechanically; he had ſaved his *queen* by the loſs of a *biſhop*; and meditating a capital ſtroke, he neither heard nor ſaw any thing but the board before him.

Mrs. Mourtray, quite out of patience, and full of anxiety about her ſon, exclaimed, "you are really enough to provoke a ſaint; if you won't open the letters, let me at leaſt do it."

"Do, do; any thing, whatever you pleaſe, my dear."

In conſequence of this permiſſion the letter was haſtily torn open. Mrs. Mourtray, eagerly glancing her eye over it—"I don't believe," ſaid ſhe, "it is about Henry; but it is ſuch a crabbed hand, I can't read half of it: do, Emma, come and aſſiſt me."

The ladies now tried to conſtrue this letter. Emma made out theſe few words; "he has bequeathed to you..... conſiſting of..... to the amount of thirty thouſand pounds....."

"Good God! am I awake, or do I dream?" exclaimed the mother, ſnatching the letter from her hand; "ſurely you miſtake, child: no, poſitively here are the very words!"

"Papa! O papa! ſuch news—ſuch joyful news!"

"Now

"Now do, pray, mind your papa!—There he ſits immoveable!—I firmly believe an earthquake would not rouſe him!—Mr. Mourtray; why, Mr. Mourtray, I ſay."

"Dear, dear papa! pray liſten."

"Check mate, Sir!" cried Mourtray, triumphantly riſing from the table, and puſhing back his chair.

"*Aſſurement je ne m'y attendois pas!*" ſaid Du Maſſon, ſhrugging up his ſhoulders.

"No, to be ſure, how ſhould you!" cried Mrs. Mourtray, thinking only of the legacy: "I believe nobody expected it."

"Well, my dear, what is it you have been ſaying?" quietly aſked Mourtray, as he ſtirred the fire: "I ſuppoſe there is ſome

ſome good news, by Emma's capering about ſo."

"News, indeed!" anſwered Mrs. Mourtray, half ſullenly; "God bleſs my heart! have not I been ſcreaming to you this half hour, to tell you very great news; but you would not attend to me."

"Well, ſpeak, I am all attention."

"Thirty thouſand . . ."—"*Trente mille des patriotes priſes et tuées!*" interrupting her, "*vraiment c'eſt une grande nouvelle!*" cried Du Maſſon, rubbing his hands."

"Lord bleſs me! why, *Monſieur*, the French are quite out of the queſtion. I want, if poſſible, to make Mr. Mourtray underſtand, that he has got a legacy of thirty thouſand pounds! and God knows what beſides."

"In-

"Indeed!" cried Mourtray, coolly, whilſt, with an air of incredulity, he took the letter to read. "Let him convince himſelf, my love," ſaid Mrs. Mourtray to Emma, who had clung hold of her father's hand, eagerly aſſuring him of the truth of the legacy.

Du Maſſon, who underſtood Engliſh very imperfectly, could not, in the leaſt, comprehend what had happened; but ſat with his mouth open, his eyes fixed, and twirling his thumbs, waiting an explanation.

Meanwhile, Mourtray convinced himſelf of the reality of his good fortune; and as he finiſhed the letter, he ſaid, "Upon my word, my dear, this is extraordinary news!"

"Charming! delightful!" exclaimed both ladies: "and now, papa," ſaid Emma, preſſing his hand between her's,—

"and

"and now, papa, we can go to London!"

"To be ſure, my dear, or any where elſe," ſaid Mrs. Mourtray, anſwering for her huſband; "what may not be done with ſuch a vaſt ſum of money!"

"I hope," replied Mourtray, "if things really are as ſtated in this letter; but we muſt not be too ſanguine before we are abſolutely in poſſeſſion of this money.—But here is another letter to read."

This contained nothing material. Whilſt he was reading it, Mrs. Mourtray, after muttering ſomething about damping people's joy, ſuddenly recollected what tranſports her dear Henry would feel on this occaſion; and had almoſt a mind to ſend off an expreſs inſtantly, to impart to him the glad tidings. Emma was explaining them to Du Maſſon, who, with his pencil, on a corner of the

the neglected newſpaper, was reducing the thirty thouſand pounds into French livres; which operation being done, he exclaimed, lifting up his hands and eyes, "*Ah! quelle ſomme! quelle fortune immenſe!*"—"It is, indeed," echoed Emma, "an immenſe ſum;" who, never having poſſeſſed more than a few ſhillings in her purſe, conſidered this legacy as boundleſs.

Mutual congratulations now paſſed between the family; and Du Maſſon, having made his, retired to his chamber; when Mourtray offered to the ladies to read the letter aloud, to which they gladly conſented.

Lincoln's-Inn, Feb. 20, 17—.

"SIR,

"I have the honour to inform you of an ev[illegible]n which you are highly intereſted. Your couſin, Mr. John Mourtray, after a ſhort illneſs of only three days,

days, departed this life, at his lodgings in Great Marlborough-ſtreet, at a quarter before ſeven yeſterday evening. He was but juſt returned from Antigua, rather in an infirm ſtate of health; and it is imagined that a ſevere cold, caught on his journey from Plymouth, haſtened his end.

"My reſpectable friend and client, Simon Chowles, Eſq., and the deceaſed, who had long been in habits of intimacy, deſired my attendance yeſterday morning, at the ſick gentleman's lodgings, to receive inſtructions for his will; which being made according to Mr. John Mourtray's directions, was by him duly executed; Mr. Chowles and myſelf being appointed his executors. Herewith I ſend you a ſhort ſketch of the contents of the ſaid will . . ."

"Hold," cried Mrs. Mourtray, "do not puzzle my brains with law terms,

but, in a few words, explain what is left to you."

"It may be as well," replied Mourtray with a ſmile.

"Ten thouſand pounds, then, of this property, Mr. Sharp (the attorney) tells me, conſiſt of ſtock in the three per cent. conſols; the remaining twenty thouſand are in the hands of Mr. Chowles . . ."

"And who is this Mr. Chowles?" aſked Mrs. Mourtray.

"A conſiderable merchant, as I am informed, in the city. Moreover, my couſin bequeaths me his whole property in Antigua, which the attorney ſays produces, on an average, about two thouſand pounds a year . . ."

"Two thouſand a year!" exclaimed Mrs. Mourtray: "we ſhall be rolling in wealth!"

"Not

"Not ſo faſt," ſaid he: "this eſtate was not in Mr. John Mourtray's poſſeſſion at the time of his death; a Mr. Elwards, it ſeems, to whom he had let it, forcibly detained it; pretending a claim to the eſtate in right of his wife, whoſe father, he aſſerted, had not the power of ſelling it to Mr. John Mourtray. My couſin then commenced a ſuit at law with him, which the attorney ſays he was in a fair way of carrying; but his declining health not ſuffering him to wait the iſſue, he came to England to try change of climate; and Sharp ſays, he has left him all the papers relative to this affair, clearly proving his title to the eſtate, of which he has no doubt ſpeedily of putting me into poſſeſſion, without any conſiderable expenſe."

"God grant it!" cried Mrs. Mourtray; "but I prefer the money to the eſtate; for my part I love certainties. Is there nothing elſe in the letter?"

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"It concludes thus," anſwered Mourtray.

"All theſe matters ſhall hereafter be fully explained by Mr. Chowles and myſelf; and it is highly expedient that you come to town as ſoon as you can make it convenient to yourſelf.

"I propoſed, before your relation's demiſe, to ſend for you; but he ſaid it was too late; and that, having lived abroad ſo long, he had no recollection of your perſon; although bearing his name, and being of his blood, he had always intended making you his heir.

"I am, Sir, with due reſpect,
Your moſt obedient ſervant,
TIM. SHARP."

"*Lionel Mourtray, Eſq.*"

"Poor man!" cried Mourtray with a ſigh, folding up the letter, "poor man! it is melancholy, after having ſpent half his

his life out of his native country, that he ſhould only return home to die!—I wiſh I had ſeen him; perhaps, with care, he might have been ſaved."

"To be ſure it is melancholy for him," obſerved Mrs. Mourtray, with looks that belied her words—"very melancholy; but, after all, ſince he was to die, it little ſignifies where; and I cannot ſee why you ſhould wiſh a ſickly perſon had lived, whom you did not know; when, by his deceaſe, you will be able ſo opportunely to provide for your children, juſt coming into life."

Mourtray made no reply; he ſeemed buried in thought. "I hope," continued his wife, "that you are planning our journey to town."

"All in good time, my dear."

"Remember, you are desired to go immediately."

"I intend it: for I shall be desirous, after learning all the particulars of my poor cousin's affairs, and taking proper counsel, of maturely considering, whether or not, I shall take the necessary measures for the recovery of the estate: after which I shall return home, and see what can be done to make this house comfortable."

"You had much better let this old house alone," said Mrs. Mourtray, "and immediately get us a good one in town."

"Do, dear papa!" cried Emma: "I hope you will carry us thither."

Mourtray, smiling, promised he would; and, at his wife's repeated entreaties, he consented to depart for London the next morning;

morning, where it was agreed he ſhould hire a ready-furniſhed houſe for three months; and, as ſoon as this was done, that his family ſhould join him. The intended alterations at Downton, upon reflection, he poſtponed till he had conſulted ſome able architect.

Emma, without dwelling much on remote and uncertain contingencies, was ſatisfied that the thirty thouſand pounds would make her parents rich: this wealth, therefore, would enable them to indulge her in all thoſe objects ſhe moſt wiſhed.

While they had been making their arrangements, after emptying the contents of her ſlender purſe into old Andrew's hand, ſhe ran to Du Maſſon's little ſtudy, where ſhe found him, not, as ſhe expected, elated with joy, but grave and thoughtful.

"What means this?" cried ſhe. "Surely you did not underſtand what I told you!"

He aſſured her he had perfectly underſtood her; but that, though he rejoiced in the good fortune of his reſpectable friends, he could not help apprehending that it might deprive him of the pleaſure of their ſociety.

"Let not that grieve you; but cheer up, *Monſieur*. What is wealth good for, but to give us the means of gladdening the hearts of others as well as our own? And you may be certain, when my father goes away, he will take care to place you in a comfortable ſituation."

Du Maſſon bowed:—"*Mais pourquoi partir, Mademoiſelle? Ou pourriez vous etre mieux qu'ici? Le chateau eſt un peu antique, mais* ——."

"Oh!

"Oh! Heaven!" cried Emma, "why you would not wiſh me to be buried in this dull place all my life? Go I muſt, and go I ſhall: I long to ſee London, to ſee Lady Bell, and a thouſand other things."

Du Maſſon, ſhrugging his ſhoulders, hinted the dangers of worldly pleaſures; reverting to the misfortunes of his country, which he chiefly attributed to the luxury and diſſipation of the Pariſians before the revolution.

But Emma was not in a humour to liſten to a ſermon; and, ſmiling, ſaid ſhe would attend to him another time. She then deſired him to put on a merry face, and come to ſupper; aſſuring him, ſhe would not let her father depart without giving him cauſe to be as gay as herſelf.

The old man's countenance now brightened, for he knew the excellence

of her heart, and that he might rely upon her promiſe. Misfortunes and extreme penury had ſomewhat contracted his mind, and made him feel a good deal more ſolicitous about his own intereſt than that of others; nevertheleſs, as far as was in his nature, he rejoiced at the proſperity of his benefactors, and took his ſhare in the hilarity of the evening.

Mrs. Mourtray and Emma, of courſe, were in the higheſt ſpirits; both enjoying the idea of ſurprizing Henry Mourtray with the delightful tidings of their unexpected good fortune: the former wrote him a line that evening, to be ready for the poſt next day. Emma wiſhed ſhe might write to Lady Bell, but conſoled herſelf for the prohibition, by the thought that ſhe would be more agreeably ſurprized to hear the news from her own mouth.

Whilſt,

Whilſt, till a very late hour, the ladies amuſed themſelves with gay projects for the future, Mr. Mourtray occaſionally liſtened to them with leſs *ſang froid* than uſual; and ſometimes revolved in his mind all his favourite ſchemes of reſtoring to the ſeat of his anceſtors ſome degree of beauty and neatneſs.

CHAP. VI.

FAITHFUL to her word, Emma roſe early the following morning, to mention to her father the promiſes of aſſiſtance ſhe had ventured, in his name, to give Du Maſſon. He embraced her tenderly, and leaving a trifle in her hands, by way of earneſt, aſſured her he would ſend from town ſomething better worth the old man's acceptance. He was juſt on the point of ſetting out on his journey, when Mrs. Mourtray appeared, again to remind him of what ſhe had been earneſtly recommending, which was the abſolute neceſſity of procuring a handſome carriage, to be ready againſt her arrival in town.

With this injunction he departed; and ſhe and her daughter, willing to profit by a fine day, proceeded, after breakfaſt, to

to take a walk on the downs. Their opening views ſo engroſſed their thoughts, that they had wandered a conſiderable way from home before they diſcovered it; yet the ſnow on the ground made it rather bad walking.

At length wearineſs obliged them to return, and they were within a hundred yards of the paddock gate, when they ſaw a gentleman briſkly trotting towards them, whoſe figure had very much the air of Sydney's.

"Bleſs me!" cried Mrs. Mourtray, "is not that Mr. Sydney, the ugly man I ſaw at the ball: what can bring him here?"

Emma bluſhed, for more than one reaſon; and, if ſhe had any ſuſpicion of the cauſe of his appearance, her mother's expreſſion would alone have prevented her from avowing it.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mourtray, however, according to her uſual cuſtom, began diſcuſſing her own conjectures, all quite different from thoſe of her daughter; and, before ſhe had ſettled this point, Sydney diſmounted, and joined them.

After the uſual compliments, Mrs. Mourtray eagerly enquired, what brought him to that part of the country; his own habitation being at a great diſtance from it.

He anſwered, not without ſome degree of confuſion, that he had buſineſs at ——, and could not paſs ſo near Downton, without ſtopping to enquire after the health of a family, for whom he had ſo great a reſpect: encouraged to take this liberty, by having the honour of ſome acquaintance with Miſs Mourtray.

To this Mrs. Mourtray ſlightly courteſied; and then, apologizing that ſhe could

could not desire him to make any stay, her husband being absent, she just coolly asked, whether he would partake of their family dinner; observing, however, that it was very dangerous riding over the downs at night, the hollow ways being filled with snow.

Sydney protested he would willingly defy this danger, or indeed any other, to enjoy the pleasure of passing a few hours at Downton, looking at Emma, with eager and sparkling eyes, who, with her wonted frankness and good humour, said she was delighted to see him.

"Delighted!" repeated Mrs. Mourtray to herself, contracting her brow—"delighted!—how can the girl say so?" Emma instantly perceiving, by her mother's face, that she had said too much, became more reserved in her expressions.

The

The dinner paſſed in converſing on general topics of weather, news, and country occurrences, with occaſional myſterious hints, dropped by Mrs. Mourtray, of the change in her fortune; to which Sydney liſtened with an air of intereſt, repreſſing, however, his curioſity to learn more than ſhe choſe to communicate; yet, when ſhe mentioned her intention of ſoon removing to town, his heart bounded with delight, and he could not refrain from exclaiming—"Good God! how glad I am!—for there I may have frequent opportunities of ſeeing you ladies."

"You think, then, of going to town to make ſome ſtay?" aſked Mrs. Mourtray, coldly.

"O, yes; and I hope, Madam, you will allow me the honour of calling upon you ſometimes."

She

She bowed, and ſaid, heſitatingly, "We ſhall be a good deal engaged, Sir, and probably little at home, as our ſtay in town will be but ſhort."

"But ſometimes, Madam, I may have the good fortune to find you."

"Perhaps," was all her reply.

Although Sydney had no further view in this viſit than merely to have a pleaſure, which it appeared to him an age ſince he had been deprived of, that of ſeeing Emma, he could not help, when he thought himſelf unobſerved, fixing his eyes upon her with an expreſſion of tenderneſs, which did not paſs unnoticed by Mrs. Mourtray, who, repeatedly looking at her watch, obſerved how ſhocking the ſnow had made the roads.

Sydney, who, in compliance with his inclinations, had as long as poſſible diſregarded

regarded theſe hints, felt at length that decorum conſtrained him to depart; he, therefore, rang the bell, and deſired his horſe might be brought to the door.—The horſe not arriving immediately, he ſought to reconcile her to the delay, by relating ſeveral anecdotes and accounts of things and places he had ſeen on the continent, where he had lived a great deal.

But Mrs. Mourtray, who had as great a diſlike to a plain face as Lady Wilmington had predilection for a handſome one, determined not to be amuſed; and obſerving that he ſtill lingered, though his horſe had been announced as ready, ſhe ſaid, riſing from her ſeat, "Indeed, Sir, it is getting extremely dark; I mean, it will get very dark; and only a few nights ago, a poor man of this village loſt his way, and was near periſhing. I recommend to you, therefore, not to loſe a moment,

moment, as I ſhould be very ſorry, if you were to meet with an accident."

"To relieve you, Madam, from this apprehenſion," ſaid Sydney, ſmiling, "I will go this inſtant;" and, bowing to her and Emma, he added, "May I hope, Miſs Mourtray, that your good wiſhes will attend me in this perilous expedition? Nothing leſs can arm me with courage to undertake it."

Emma gaily aſſured him, that, if theſe could be of any uſe, he might depend upon having them; and Sydney then departed.

"Pray," ſaid Mrs. Mourtray, as ſoon as he was gone, "who is this young man? What is his ſituation?"

"I know little more, Madam," replied Emma, "than that he is heir to his mo-

ther's,

ther's (Lady Clannarmon,) title and eſtate, who does not, however, ſeem very kind to him, for ſhe ſuffers him to reſide in a farm houſe, and lets the family ſeat."

"Umph! It is a pity he is ſo ugly, for I ſee clearly he is ſmitten with you."

"With me, Mamma! He has never hinted any thing of the kind, I aſſure you."

"That may be; but I hope, if ever he ſhould ſay any thing of the kind, that you will give him no encouragement; for with your perſon, and the fortune you may now expect, you may do better."

"I have not the leaſt partiality for Mr. Sydney," ſaid Emma, "though I muſt acknowledge, that I believe him to be a very worthy man; and I am certain that he is very ſenſible, agreeable, and dances to perfection."

"Very

" Very likely; but you did wrong to ſay you were delighted to ſee him: young perſons ought not to uſe ſuch ſtrong expreſſions, when ſpeaking to men."

Emma bluſhed. " I am ſure I did this very innocently," ſaid ſhe; " though I certainly did feel pleaſed to ſee him, but no more than I ſhould to ſee any body elſe of my acquaintance."

Whilſt this converſation was paſſing, Sydney, more enamoured than ever, was haſtening to the place of his deſtination; his mind occupied with the delightful idea, that he ſhould often ſee Emma in town; till this was damped by the juſt apprehenſion, that ſo much beauty could not appear in the world without attracting a multitude of rivals; one of whom, better gifted by nature and fortune than himſelf, might touch that heart he valued ſo highly. He felt, too, with a ſevere pang, that if, by a miracle, this ſhould not

not happen, Emma might not like to ally herſelf to his mother, whoſe failings he in ſecret deplored.

Lady Clannarmon was the only child of the laſt Baron of that name. In her youth ſhe had poſſeſſed great beauty and vivacity, with violent paſſions, which ſhe never attempted to controul. Lord Clannarmon for many years lived abroad in a public character, and Sydney's father attended him as private ſecretary: though perfectly a gentleman, he was wholly deſtitute of fortune; his appointment, therefore, to this office he conſidered as truly fortunate, eſpecially as his Lordſhip treated him with infinite kindneſs and attention. One twelvemonth Mr. Sydney had paſſed content and happy, punctually performing the duties of his ſituation, and daily riſing in Lord Clannarmon's favour; but, unfortunately, he had made equal progreſs in that of Miſs Clannarmon.

His

His handſome perſon and agreeable manners had made an impreſſion on her heart, which, ſo far from repreſſing, ſhe took every opportunity of diſcovering to him. But, ſenſible of the inferiority of his ſituation to her's, and gratefully attached to her father, he feigned not to obſerve what ſecretly flattered his vanity. Two years younger, however, than Miſs Clanmarmon; living conſtantly under the ſame roof with a beautiful girl, who ſcrupled not to make advances to him; poſſeſſing himſelf no firmneſs of mind, inſenſibly he forgot his obligations to the father, to devote himſelf wholly to the daughter.

The conſequences alarmed them both, but Sydney far the moſt; for Miſs Clanmarmon, bold and fertile in contrivance, ſoon planned a ſcheme that ſhe thought would extricate her from her preſent dilemma.

She

She had an aunt in England, who had repeatedly requeſted her to ſpend ſome time with her, which ſhe had invariably declined, till ſhe ſaw herſelf threatened with ſhame and diſgrace; but this invitation ſhe now reſolved to accept, eaſily obtaining her father's approbation: after which, having put Mrs. Barnſley (her maid) into her confidence, ſhe haſtened to England, leaving ſecret directions with her lover, to ſecure her from detection, by carefully preventing any letters from her father reaching her aunt's houſe: inſtead of which, they were to be ſent to her, in London; where, under a feigned name, ſhe had hired private lodgings to wait her confinement, writing conſtantly to Lord Clanmarmon, and dating her letters from his ſiſter's houſe. Although ſhe had no apprehenſions that her father would diſcover the impoſition, yet, to guard againſt accidents, Mr. Sydney had injunctions to ſuffer no letter to paſs into his Lordſhip's hands, till he had examined

it.

it. Her ſcheme ſucceeded perfectly: in ſix weeks after her arrival in London, ſhe gave birth to a ſon, whom ſhe had chriſtened Lewis Fitzaubert; and a fortnight afterwards ſhe made her promiſed viſit to her aunt, pretending ſhe was juſt arrived from the continent, and recently recovered from a very dangerous illneſs: her pale face confirming her aſſertion, it was implicitly believed.

Her child, by her directions, was placed in a village, about fifteen miles from town, under the care of a nurſe, who was paid by Mrs. Barnſley (his ſuppoſed mother) for his maintenance, one year in advance.

Hitherto Lord Clannarmon had not entertained the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of his daughter's conduct; when, one day, his ſecretary (whoſe vigilance had relaxed ſince he believed the danger over) being abſent, the letters from England, no longer

impeded in their progreſs, came ſtraight into his own hands. Seeing his daughter's ſeal, without heſitation he opened a letter, intended for Sydney, written in ſuch terms as could leave him no doubt of her diſhonour; and, in a poſtſcript, ſhe mentioned, that now ſhe was with her aunt, it was not poſſible for her to ſee her infant; but that it was well.

To deſcribe the paroxyſm of rage of a father, extremely jealous of his honour, who thus found himſelf duped and diſgraced by an only child, and betrayed by the perſon in whom he moſt confided—is impoſſible!—Indiſpoſed before with the gout, the violence of his paſſion threw it into his ſtomach; and though, by medical aſſiſtance, it was not immemediately fatal, he ſurvived the ſhock but a very few days; long enough, however, for him to have time to diſinherit his daughter of all he could leave from her; but he could not deprive her of his

title, and about five-and-twenty hundred a year.

Mr. Sydney had returned home, in the height of the confuſion, juſt as Lord Clannarmon had ſufficiently recovered his ſpeech to ſhower down the moſt horrible imprecations on his head. Guilty, abaſhed, and wretched, he had recourſe to flight, and remained in concealment till he heard of Lord Clannarmon's death. As ſoon as this intelligence reached him, he made ſuch expedition in getting to England, that he arrived in time to be the firſt perſon to announce it to Miſs Clannarmon; who, though a good deal ſhocked for an inſtant, ſoon felt more reſentment than ſorrow, when ſhe learned, afterwards, that her father had puniſhed her miſconduct by leaving to a diſtant branch of the family four thouſand pounds a year, that he could diſpoſe of.

Her paſſion for her lover, which had acquired new force by abſence, and the malignant joy ſhe felt in braving her father's memory, induced her, without delay, to beſtow her hand and fortune upon him.

The year following the new Baroneſs produced a ſon, whoſe birth was celebrated with the greateſt rejoicings, whilſt her firſt-born, Fitzaubert, condemned to obſcurity, ſcarcely ever occupied a place in her remembrance.

His father, indeed, had often expreſſed a deſire to ſee him, which Lady Clannarmon peremptorily refuſed: "Why ſhould you ſee him?" ſhe would ſay: "What good can it do the boy? You know he is well; why run the riſk, by a fooliſh fancy, of expoſing my reputation?"

Sydney, weak, dependant, and governed by his wife, ventured not to oppoſe her will.

will. The ſecret of Fitzaubert's birth was only known to his parents and Mrs. Barnſley; Lady Clannarmon, therefore, flattered herſelf it would never be divulged. All tenderneſs for her unfortunate ſon had been extinguiſhed in her breaſt from the inſtant of Julian Sydney's birth; and inſenſibly her huſband, doatingly fond of the child, who grew up under his eye, ceaſed to think of *him* whom he had never ſeen.

The poor neglected boy remained till he was eight years old with his nurſe: about that time, Mrs. Barnſley (Lady Clannarmon's confidante) dying, ſhe no longer apprehended detection; conſequently ſhe placed him under the care of a clergyman, as a deſtitute orphan, whom ſhe protected out of charity; and having done this, ſhe conſidered ſhe had done *all* that was neceſſary, giving herſelf no further trouble than to pay annually a ſmall ſum for his maintenance.

Sydney heard of this arrangement, but, full of domeſtic chagrins occaſioned by Lady Clannarmon's avarice and deſpotiſm, he dared not ſolicit for his ſon the kindneſs denied to himſelf. Julian, amiable and good, was his only comfort, and likewiſe beloved by his mother, as much as was conſiſtent with her narrow, ſelfiſh diſpoſition.

Every attention was paid to his education; for Lady Clannarmon, who did not want for ſenſe, ſaid, it was requiſite that talents and information ſhould make amends, in him, for the want of perſonal endowments.

Fitzaubert had now attained the age of twenty, without being known to his father, and ſtill in entire ignorance of his family; when, one day, Mr. Sydney being on his road to London, and breakfaſting at an inn at Bagſhot, a waiter informed him that a young gentleman

below

below earneſtly intreated to ſpeak with him. Mr. Sydney deſired he might be ſhewn in; and preſently a tall, handſome youth appeared, who, if he had not been announced by the name of Fitzaubert, he would have known to be his ſon, by his ſtrong reſemblance to Lady Clannarmon.

In the greateſt perturbation, and yet deſirous to retain his ſecret, he could ſcarcely ſtammer out an enquiry into the object of this viſit.

Fitzaubert, however, without heſitation, ſaid, that having by chance learned, from the people of the inn, that he was huſband to Lady Glannarmon, whom he had been taught to conſider as his guardian, he wiſhed to enquire, wherefore ſhe had ceaſed, for above a twelvemonth, to pay for his maintenance, to the great inconvenience of the clergyman who had educated him,—and alſo, what views ſhe

had for his future eſtabliſhment, being heartily tired of his preſent ſituation.

Sydney, at a loſs what to anſwer, ſaid he was ignorant of her intentions, but would not fail to repreſent all he wiſhed to Lady Clannarmon; when he was ſtruck aghaſt by Fitzaubert's (after a moment's ſilence, his eyes fixed full upon him) aſking—"Who was my father, Sir? How came I under Lady Clannarmon's care?" "Your father! ... your father! ... I really don't ... I can't, juſt ... but Lady Clannarmon was his friend."

"His friend! and deſert his ſon!—But tell me, Sir, have I no relation, no connection, who will acknowledge me; or do I ſtand ſingle and alone in the wide world?"

Sydney, whoſe agitation increaſed every inſtant, not venturing to anſwer, he continued—"Perhaps you knew my father,

father, Sir? Surely, if he were alive, I ſhould not be thus forlorn!"

When Sydney, no longer able to contain his feelings, cried, extending his arms to embrace him—"Your father lives—he now preſſes you to his heart!"

Fitzaubert fell in his arms, with infinite emotion, but preſently ſtruggling with it, he aſſumed his former ſtern air: "You ſay, Sir, that you are my father," cried he; "but whence comes it that, till this moment, I have never ſeen nor heard of you? Was it in conſequence of your deſertion that Lady Clannarmon (excepting when ſhe forgot me) provided for my maintenance?"

"You are raſh in your judgments, and indiſcreet in your queſtions," ſaid Sydney, much diſcompoſed; "be ſatisfied that I own you for my ſon, and as

ſuch will provide for you as well as I can."

"Pardon me, Sir," ſaid the haughty youth, "for troubling you with queſtions that, I perceive, it is inconvenient for you to anſwer: to Lady Clannarmon, therefore, I ſhall apply, to know why, without any fault of mine, that I am conſcious of, I have, during twenty years, been kept in ignorance that I had a father."

"Raſh boy!" cried Sydney in an agony of terror—"Raſh boy, beware! Half a word, a hint, may ruin you,—ruin us both for ever. Never, I charge you, let Lady Clannarmon know that you have ſeen me; and conceal from her, and all the world, what my weakneſs has extorted from me."

"If I am to be ſilent, if I am ſtill to be conſidered in the world as fatherleſs,

leſs, at leaſt, Sir, explain for what myſterious reaſon I am thus treated as an alien! Excuſe me, Sir; I cannot repreſs the wiſh of knowing, at leaſt, if I have a mother!"

"For Heaven's ſake enquire no further; perſuade yourſelf you have no mother; it is uſeleſs to mention a perſon whoſe name——."

"Is Lady Clannarmon!" exclaimed Fitzaubert, finiſhing the ſentence:—"yes, ſhe is the unnatural mother who has deſerted her unfortunate ſon, and who has made *you*, Sir, forget that you were a father."

Improper as had been the whole of Fitzaubert's language, and grating as it was to the ears of Sydney, he dared not reſent it, becauſe his conſcience told him how culpably he had acted: but when he found his ſon in full poſſeſſion of his

ſecret, he ſeemed as if petrified: at length he ſaid, "How came you to know this? How did you learn that Lady Clannarmon is your mother?"

"From yourſelf; your extreme agitation when I mentioned her: the improbability that ſhe ſhould have undertaken the care of *your* child, confirmed what I had before ſuſpected. Certain ambiguous hints dropped by Mrs. Barnſley, when I ſaw her juſt before her death, which I had often ſince revolved in my mind without being able to explain —your behaviour this morning clearly elucidated."

As all further reſerve became uſeleſs, and almoſt impoſſible, Sydney now undertook the irkſome taſk of revealing to his ſon the whole truth, endeavouring to ſoften his haughty, ſtubborn ſpirit, by repreſenting to him the exact ſtate of his own ſituation, which depended entirely

on

on his wife; promiſing, however, that he would employ a ſmall ſum, which he thought he might be able to procure, in the purchaſe of a commiſſion for him in the army, upon condition that he would give him his word never to reveal the ſecret of his birth, or let his mother ſuſpect he knew it, until he received his permiſſion.

With much reluctance Fitzaubert gave the promiſe, appearing, at laſt, tolerably ſatisfied with what he had obtained from his father; who, on his departure, flattered him with the hopes of ſeeing him again ſhortly; and Fitzaubert, who was actually on his journey to ſee Lady Clanmarmon when he accidentally met Mr. Sydney, now returned to his former abode.

To raiſe the money, and negotiate the affair of the commiſſion, now fully occupied Mr. Sydney; but before any thing

thing was concluded, he fell dangerouſly ill in London, whither Julian Sydney, without Lady Clanmarmon, had accompanied him; and, finding his end approach, in broken accents he recommended Fitzaubert to his brother, acknowledging him as his ſon, and referring him to a paper he had written, at the beginning of his illneſs, for thoſe particulars concerning him that he had neither courage nor ſtrength to relate.

As ſoon as Julian Sydney had recovered the firſt ſhock of his father's death, and paid the neceſſary attentions to his mother, who had arrived juſt in time to ſee her huſband expire, he haſtened, after peruſing with horror the diſgraceful private hiſtory of his family, to ſeek his brother, whom he had already apprized of his father's deceaſe.

Full of warmth of heart and benevolence, Sydney advanced with open arms,

to

to receive a brother he had never ſeen; but Fitzaubert, ſhrinking from his embrace, ſaid, looking ſtedfaſtly at him—"At length, then, I have the honour of ſeeing Mr. Sydney!"—dwelling with emphaſis on the name.

"Say pleaſure, rather than honour, my dear brother," cried Sydney, "for I feel much in ſeeing you."

"You are ſo good, then, to acknowledge me as a brother!"

"I am happy to call you ſo, and hope by my conduct to gain your affection."

"We are ſtrangers to each other!" ſaid Fitzaubert, coldly.

"I regret we ſhould ſo long have been ſo. Alas! we have both much to regret!—our poor father——."

"*You*

"*You* may have cauſe," cried Fitzaubert, haſtily, with his eyes flaſhing fire—"*you*, Mr. Sydney, may have cauſe to lament a father, and to love a mother; but as for me, rejected by the latter, and deceived by falſe promiſes by the former.——"

"Say not ſo," cried Sydney, interrupting him; "death alone prevented my poor father from completing what he had actually begun for your advantage: now it ſhall be my affair to bring it to a concluſion."

"You promiſe readily; but where are your means for the performance?"

"Perhaps I may obtain them from my mother; if not, whatever I have, I will ſhare with you."

"Mention not your mother; but for her, I ſhould not be reduced to the humi-

humiliating neceſſity of receiving favours from my younger brother, the future Lord Clannarmon !"

A ſentiment of indignation aroſe in Sydney's breaſt, which he could ſcarcely ſubdue ; but, recollecting that Fitzaubert felt himſelf injured and neglected, he ſaid, though not without emotion, " If ever you find me diſpoſed to arrogate to myſelf any ſuperiority for poſſeſſing what I acquire by no deſert of my own, you will do right to treat me with aſperity ; but whilſt you find me inclined to ſoften, as far as is in my power, thoſe hardſhips which I did not inflict, but which I ſincerely lament, treat me, I conjure you, as a brother."

" Will you inſtantly lend me a hundred pounds ?" aſked Fitzaubert, abruptly.

" Certainly," anſwered Sydney, without heſitation, though his ſmall allowance

ance rendered the loan thus ſuddenly required extremely inconvenient.

"Well, I believe," ſaid Fitzaubert, wringing his hands, "you will force me, in deſpite of myſelf, to love you."

Sydney, delighted at the termination of a dialogue that began ſo unpleaſantly, immediately gave his brother a draft for the money, and, after ſpending the day with him, haſtened to his mother, reſolving to try, without giving her reaſon to ſuppoſe he knew how nearly ſhe was intereſted, whether he could not ſoften her in behalf of her own and firſt-born child.

He therefore informed her, with all poſſible delicacy, that his father had revealed to him that he had a brother, a fine, handſome young man, whom he intended (had he lived) to have placed in the army; but that, by their late misfor-

misfortune, his brother had been left wholly deſtitute.

Lady Clannarmon, whoſe countenance had undergone various alterations during the time he was ſpeaking, finding he heſitated to proceed, ſaid, in a voice of ſtifled anger, "And, pray, for what purpoſe do you mention this perſon to me?"

"I thought, Madam—I hoped—to excite your pity and generoſity, to accomplish my father's intentions."

"I know not *who* has excited you," ſaid Lady Clannarmon, haughtily, "to preſume to trouble me on ſuch a ſubject: but let me recommend to you, never to repeat it!"

"I ſhould be extremely concerned, Madam, to offend you; yet, to plead for an unfortunate brother . . ."

"Brother!"

"Brother!" exclaimed Lady Clannarmon, "brother, indeed!—Mind, I forbid your calling Fitzaubert brother. The bounty he has hitherto owed to my charity ſhall inſtantly be withdrawn, if . . ."

"It has already been withdrawn. For God's ſake, Madam, conſider his deſerted, wretched ſituation."

"Get out of my ſight—depart, this inſtant!"—cried Lady Clannarmon, with ungovernable fury:—"Depart, I ſay,—leſt I ſhould forget I am *your* mother."

Sydney, finding her thus violent, obeyed, but generouſly made a ſecond attempt to ſoften her hard heart, which unnaturally deteſted her eldeſt ſon, becauſe he was a living proof of her own diſhonour. This being as unſucceſsful as the firſt, he went to town, determined to make every exertion to ſerve his brother;

brother; and, after incredible difficulties (increaſed by his wanting two years of being of age), and, at a very heavy expence, he contrived to raiſe, on the eſtate he muſt inherit after his mother's death, a ſum ſufficient to procure an enſign's commiſſion for Fitzaubert; exhauſting the chief part of his annual allowance to pay his debts, and furniſh him ſo as to appear like a gentleman.

But neither Sydney's remonſtrances, nor entreaties, nor yet his kindneſs, had ſufficient weight with Fitzaubert, to prevent his openly declaiming againſt his mother; conſidering his promiſe to his father as cancelled, by his having failed in his part of the agreement, and by her ſubſequent obduracy towards him.

Lady Clannarmon, finding the ſtory ſhe had been at ſo much pains to conceal likely to become public, thought it prudent to retire abroad, and fixed on Florence

Florence as the place of her reſidence: but, to remove Sydney at a diſtance from his brother, ſhe ſent him to make the tour of Europe, which engaged him for two years; after which, being now of age, ſhe ſuffered him to return to England, where he had been about half a year at the time he came to the fête at Wilmington, and had not ſeen Fitzaubert ſince his return, as he was abſent with the regiment to which he belonged, in Ireland.

Nevertheleſs, he never failed to hear from him whenever he experienced any pecuniary wants, which was not unfrequently the caſe, as Fitzaubert had little delicacy, and a diſpoſition prone to extravagance.

Sydney's liberality to his brother, and Lady Clannarmon's illiberality towards himſelf, had obliged him to live with much privacy and œconomy; but, juſt before

before his viſit to Downton, ſhe had unexpectedly ſent him an order on her banker for a ſum ſufficient to enable him to paſs ſome time in town, whither ſhe deſired he would immediately remove.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

A WEEK had now elapſed ſince Mourtray's departure: one letter only had been received from him, written in great haſte, merely to ſay his relation's will had been proved, and that he found the legacy would be paid immediately; but that the reſt of the affairs were rather in a more complicated ſtate than he had been given to underſtand by Sharp's firſt account: though the lawyers he had conſulted were of opinion that his title to the Antigua eſtate was good. In a poſtſcript, he added, that he had beſpoken a carriage; but had not yet found a houſe that would ſuit him.

The ladies, therefore, were obliged to reſtrain their impatience till further intelligence arrived: but with every returning poſt it broke out anew; and, at laſt,

Mrs.

Mrs. Mourtray proteſted, if her huſband did not get a houſe immediately, ſhe would go to town and get one herſelf.

But ſcarcely had ſhe uttered theſe words, when the joyful news came that he had hired a ready-furniſhed houſe in Upper Wimpole Street, which was quite prepared for the reception of his family: and, at the ſame time, he ſent a few lines to Du Maſſon, with a bank-note incloſed, which ſo enraptured the old man, that he was quite reconciled to his pupil's departure from the country, and cried—"*Partez donc, Mademoiſelle, partez; et moi auſſi je partirai, graces à Monſieur votre pere;*" declaring his intention of joining ſome of his countrymen in the iſle of Jerſey.

Mrs. Mourtray was perfectly indifferent whither he went, though ſhe wiſhed him well; having no leiſure, at that time, to think of any thing excepting her jour-

ney. But Emma really took leave of him with regret. She, likewiſe, made her farewell viſits to the poor of the village, by whom ſhe was adored; for, ſmall as her means had hitherto been, ſhe had done all in her power to ſerve them: when ſhe could not give them money, though not fond of work, ſhe made linen for them; and ſhe had perſuaded her mother to keep a little ſtore of ſimple medicines for the ſick, of which ſhe had the diſtribution. Often ſhe employed herſelf in inſtructing the children in reading and writing; and in thoſe moral and religious principles inſtilled into her by her father.

As the preparations for the removal of the family had been ſo long made, they arrived in town in two days after the receipt of Mr. Mourtray's letter. The ſight of a great city was not quite a novelty to Emma, for her mother had once taken her for a week to Bath, whilſt the Wilmington

mington family were in Ireland; but ſtill ſhe was delighted and ſurpriſed with the firſt *coup d'œil* of London.

The ſituation of her new houſe by no means pleaſed Mrs. Mourtray: ſhe complained it was almoſt as quiet as Downton; and would have preferred Bond Street, Piccadilly, or Pall Mall, to be convinced, ſhe ſaid, by the buſtle, that, at laſt, ſhe really was in London.

Emma had no ſooner embraced her father, than her firſt inquiry was, whether Wimpole Street was near Groſvenor Square, where the Wilmingtons lived; and ſhe was chagrined to learn that the diſtance was conſiderable. However, not to loſe a moment, ſhe diſpatched a note inſtantly to Lady Bell, to tell her ſhe was in town, and had ſome agreeable intelligence to communicate; having no doubt but that ſhe would fly to her immediately. But the chairman, whom ſhe had charged

to make the greateſt haſte back, after ſtaying a good while, returned, ſaying, that he had delivered the note, and been told it required no anſwer.

A little diſconcerted, but willing to excuſe her friend, ſhe ſuppoſed the family might be at dinner when her note was delivered; recollecting that Lord Wilmington dined very late in town.—Poſſibly Lady Bell might not be able to come till the next morning; but *then* ſhe was ſure of ſeeing her.

In this, however, ſhe was miſtaken; for the morning paſſed, and no news came from Groſvenor Square! Emma, and Mrs. Mourtray alſo, was now convinced that there had been ſome blunder in the delivery of the note; and, therefore, without ſtanding on further ceremony, ſo abſurd amongſt friends, the former reſolved, in the evening, to go thither herſelf: but, juſt as ſhe was ſitting down to dinner,

dinner, ſhe received a crumpled ſcrap of paper, with theſe words:

" DEAR EMMA,

" What can have brought you to town? God knows when I can ſee you, for I am engaged over head and ears! I will, however, contrive (if mamma will let me) to call upon you ſome morning when I have leiſure. Ever your's,

ISABELLA FONTELIEU."

This cold laconic note, that, at once, let down all Emma's hopes of ſurpriſing her friend agreeably, was ſuch a grievous diſappointment to her, that ſhe could ſcarcely refrain from tears; but, aſhamed to ſhew ſuch weakneſs, ſhe handed it to her mother, and left the room.—" Not to expreſs the leaſt ſatisfaction at my arrival, after all her warm profeſſions of friendſhip!" ſaid ſhe to herſelf. " Ah! my father, I fear, judged more truly of Lady Bell than myſelf."

Mrs. Mourtray ſoon called her daughter back, and, without any reſerve, gave it as her opinion, that Lady Bell had behaved ſo very ill, ſhe ſhould think no more about her: but Emma, although angry, no ſooner heard her condemned, than ſhe forgot her diſpleaſure, to juſtify her; alledging, in her defence, that ſhe was ſure ſhe had not acted according to her own feelings, but had been guided by others leſs partial to her.

Mrs. Mourtray, not venturing to rely on her own judgment in ſo important an article as that of dreſs, had made little addition to her own and daughter's wardrobe; waiting till ſhe had ſeen Lady Wilmington and the young ladies, who muſt, of courſe, be in the height of the faſhion: but, now, having little hopes of improving her taſte in conſequence of ſuch models, ſhe reſolved to wait no longer; and, the next morning, ſhe hurried Emma

from

from ſhop to ſhop, till both were half dead with fatigue.

The whole family, the day following, were invited to dine with Mr. Chowles, who had ſeen Mr. Mourtray often ſince he came to town; and had waited upon the ladies the morning after their arrival.

Mr. Chowles, though before unknown to Mourtray, being executor to his late couſin, had neceſſarily much buſineſs to tranſact with him. The twenty thouſand pounds in his hands, he had, at firſt, offered to pay immediately; but, afterwards, having hinted that it would be a great convenience to him in his mercantile concerns to be ſuffered to retain this money ſome time longer, Mourtray, eaſy and obliging, though he could have diſpoſed of it much more advantageouſly, conſented to leave it with him.

Chowles was a capital Weſt-Indian merchant, whoſe commercial dealings were very extenſive, and whoſe credit was ſuppoſed to be eſtabliſhed on the firmeſt baſis. He did not, however, reſide at his counting-houſe in the city, but had a large houſe in Hanover Square.

Thither the Mourtrays were conveyed, at five o'clock, on the day appointed: he himſelf met them at the head of the ſtairs, and introduced them into the drawing-room, where they found a gentleman and lady, whom he preſented to them as his relations; adding, in an audible whiſper—"The honourable Mr. and Mrs. Prouting."

The gentleman was a little, thin, ſqueezed figure, with a pale peaked face, and a pink noſe; apparently the moſt inſignificant of beings, who ſeemed to have nothing to do in this world but to

echo

echo the words of his wife; a lady who ſhewed, on all occaſions, a moſt decided will of her own.

She was a very plain woman, much marked with the ſmall-pox, with a very ordinary figure: probably, however, ſhe did not think ſo, for ſhe was dreſſed to the extremity of the faſhion; in a tunic of violet-coloured velvet, with yellow ſatin ſleeves, ſo ſhort, as to leave her red elbows bare: her own ſandy hair was concealed under a black Brutus wig, in the front of which ſhe wore a large diamond ſtar, to faſten on it two high yellow and green feathers.

It would be very unjuſt not to add to theſe portraits, that of the maſter of the houſe, who was a very remarkable perſonage in all places.

Mr. Chowles was between forty and fifty; he had paſſed the younger part of

his life in the Weſt-Indies, where his complexion acquired a deep ſhade of a tawny red; and, in proportion as he gained wealth, he had gained fleſh; which, unfortunately, did not comport with his height, being rather ſhort. Large ſtaring eyes ſeemed ſtarting out of his ſhining forehead; and his long yellow teeth ſeemed to have the ſame propenſity to puſh themſelves into notice.

Such was Chowles in perſon; who now, to amuſe his gueſts, carried them through a ſuite of rooms he had juſt furniſhed; willing to impreſs them with a proper idea of his taſte and magnificence.

But Emma, who had been ſo much at Wilmington, had learned to diſtinguiſh between tawdry ill choſen ornaments and elegant ſimplicity; therefore, to Mr. Chowles's obſervation, that every thing in his houſe was rich and *taſtey*, ſhe had nothing

nothing to reply; though her mother perfectly concurred with him in this opinion.

The dinner was profuſe, and an immenſe quantity of plate was exhibited; but the ſervants were vulgar and awkward: Chowles, from time to time, looking, with a broad grin, at his country gueſts, to obſerve the impreſſion his ſumptuous table made on people ſo long accuſtomed to frugal œconomy.

"You ſee, Miſs," ſaid he to Emma at the deſſert (for he paid her marked attention)—"you ſee that we city folks can have fine, ay, and good things too, as well as the quality. No offence, I hope, couſin (bowing to Mrs. Prouting): but, though I hate to brag, I muſt ſay I ſhould like to ſee the man, be he who he may, who underſtands better than myſelf them ſort of things!"

"O! my dear Sir," cried Mrs. Prouting, "all the world does juſtice to your taſte; your cook's merits, too, are in high eſtimation; and it was but yeſterday evening that I heard a great perſonage ſay, that he believed you had determined to monopolize all the fine things in London; for nobody could get a valuable picture, a ring, or even a ſnuff-box, if once you heard of it."

"Ha! ha! and a very good reaſon for that. Why, all your great people are as poor as rats; none of them bleed freely: now, for my part, when once I like a thing (looking, with a ſly wink, at Emma), have it I will; ſo there's an end of it."

"Very right, perfectly right," ſaid the complaiſant Mrs. Prouting.

"Who can ſo well afford to pleaſe himſelf?" added her huſband.

"As

"As to that,—though far be it from me to brag, for I hate oſtentation," ſaid Chowles, ſwelling with importance—"I will count guineas with any man as long as he chooſes; and this is pretty well known at t'other end of the town."

While Chowles was thus engaged in boaſting, Mrs. Prouting, in a low voice, ſaid to Emma—"People in a certain line of life paſs ſo great a part of it, before they are accuſtomed to have any thing tolerable about them, that when, at laſt, they have, it is ſuch a novelty, they can't help boring one to death about it; though it would be much wiſer if they held their tongues, and did not remind one that they had once no right to expect it. Poor Mr. Chowles, though the beſt man in the world, has this failing."

Emma, aſtoniſhed at this ſpeech, from a perſon who, ſhe underſtood, was related to their hoſt, and who, but a few minutes

nutes before, had doſed him with flattery, only ſaid, in reply, that Mr. Chowles ſeemed to have a good-natured pleaſure in doing as much as he could to gratify others.

"No, ma'am," anſwered Mrs. Prouting: "you are quite out there; he ſports his finery only to gratify himſelf."

All this while Mrs. Mourtray was enjoying herſelf extremely. Here ſhe found herſelf perfectly at her eaſe: not confounded in a crowd, as ſhe had often been at Wilmington; not awed into ſilence by the proud reſerve of the entertainers; but conſidered now as one of the chief objects of attention.

During dinner, ſo many things had been recommended to her to taſte, ſo many objects to admire, ſhe had ſo much to ſay and to hear, that it is doubtful which was the moſt delighted, ſhe or Chowles:

Chowles; for it was a high gratification to his vanity and oſtentation to entertain a gueſt of her deſcription.

But one circumſtance diſcompoſed her a little; this was, that her huſband was in one of his ſilent moods, ſurveying, with the moſt perfect indifference, every thing around him. In vain ſhe tried, by her frequent appeals, to rouſe him into admiration; ſhe could not get him to ſay three words, till the converſation turned on politics.

Then, indeed, finding Chowles betrayed ſome predilection towards the revolutionary principles of France, merely becauſe he weakly imagined, if eſtabliſhed in this country, his ſuperiors, whom he envied and deteſted, would be brought down to his own level; Mourtray thought it neceſſary openly to avow, not only his ſteady attachment to the Britiſh conſtitution, but alſo his rooted averſion to democratic

cratic principles; and, as none of the ladies had any taste for political discussions, Mrs. Prouting proposed to withdraw.

After the gentlemen had joined the female party, the evening passed rather more disagreeably than the dinner had done, in Emma's opinion; for Chowles, who felt for her a sensation not sufficiently refined to be called admiration, demonstrated it by such offensive familiarity, that she shrunk from him in disgust. He seemed to suppose, that, as he could afford to purchase most things he coveted, she might be classed in this number; and he attributed her reserve, partly to her not properly understanding the value of his attentions, and partly to her rustic education.

With her mother's behaviour, who was evidently dazzled by his magnificence, he was extremely satisfied; and he paid such court

court to her, that he entirely won her good opinion.

Fortunately for Emma, her father did not relish the party better than she did; and, to her no small relief, at a tolerably early hour he hinted to his wife his wish of retiring: to this she yielded with infinite reluctance; for, after having lived so long in retirement, she was extremely glad to be in any sort of company; and having no great delicacy in discrimination, she found more to approve than to condemn in those with whom she had passed, as she said, a most agreeable day.

Mourtray, who had a high respect for the character of a British merchant, and who had known, formerly, many commercial men of distinguished worth, was much disappointed to find Chowles so very different from what he had imagined.

Although

Although he entertained no doubt of his honeſty and integrity, he had not found that openneſs and ſincerity which he had expected; for, whenever he had talked to him upon buſineſs, he either pleaded haſte, or anſwered the queſtions put to him with ſome degree of evaſion.

Mourtray had concluded that he ſhould find a moſt hoſpitable reception, and a very handſome eſtabliſhment, becauſe it was well known that Chowles was exceedingly rich: but the ridiculous parade he had exhibited, convinced him that he had a vain, narrow mind; and though he would readily have excuſed in him ſome degree of vulgarity, he was diſguſted to obſerve that his manners were not only coarſe, but forward and preſumptuous.

As for his democratical principles, Mourtray ſoon ſaw they were the effect of exceſſive ignorance; and that, not underſtanding in the leaſt what he pretended

tended to admire, he had only a confuſed notion that there ought to be an equality in conditions; though he would have been very ſorry to have this extended to wealth.

Finding himſelf, however, neceſſarily connected with this man, in conſequence of his late couſin's bequeſt, Mourtray judged it prudent not to diſcloſe, even to his family, the unfavourable impreſſion he had received of his character.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

THE following morning, juſt as Mrs. and Miſs Mourtray were going out, Lord Wilmington was announced. Nothing could be more unexpected than this viſit, as it was an honour he had very rarely conferred on the family at Downton.—After a profuſion of bows, ſmiles, and compliments, he threw himſelf into a chair oppoſite to Emma; whoſe appearance, improved by her mourning habit, and a faſhionable ſtyle of head dreſs, did not eſcape his notice; and, whilſt he was making fine ſpeeches to Mrs. Mourtray, with his eyes ſeemingly caſt down, he was employed in reviewing the charms of her lovely daughter, whenever he could, unobſerved, ſteal a glance towards her.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mourtray, who imagined ſhe had cauſe to be diſſatisfied with him, and his whole family, paid little regard either to his ſudden condeſcenſion, or to the apologies he undertook to make for the Ladies; but, deſirous of ſhewing that ſhe had acquired ſome importance, ſhe haſtened to impart to him the news of the acceſſion of fortune, with all its circumſtances, which had enabled her to ſee her friends in town.

Though ſhe would not, for the world, have told a premeditated lie, ſhe could not refrain from enlarging on her future proſpects; in fact, always ſeeing things as ſhe wiſhed them to be.

The Earl feigned to liſten to this communication with the greateſt intereſt; but, though an agreeable ſurprize was pictured on his face, he already knew the moſt eſſential part of it. Delighted, however, to be furniſhed with ſo plauſible a pre-

a pretence for redoubling his civilities, after aſſuring her that he never had heard of any event that gave him half ſo much pleaſure, as of her increaſe of fortune, he talked of her huſband as one of the perſons whom he moſt eſteemed; lamented that he had not the happineſs of ſeeing him more frequently at Wilmington; gently reproached her for having confined herſelf ſo much at Downton; and concluded by proteſting, that the Ladies in Groſvenor Square were abſolutely wretched; that bad colds had prevented their having the honour of calling upon ſuch valuable, ſuch amiable friends (looking at Emma), as Mrs. and Miſs Mourtray.

He then, juſt before he took his leave, entreated them to have the goodneſs to wave ceremony, and indulge Lady Wilmington with their company at dinner the following day;—" and do, my dear Miſs Mourtray," added he, " prevail upon

upon your excellent father to be of the party: ſix o'clock is our hour: you know my exactneſs, having often made us ſupremely happy by becoming our gueſt at Wilmington. I am forced to be a great œconomiſt of time, being always overwhelmed with buſineſs, and never having a minute I can call my own: this makes me as regular as clock work; and, unleſs I am detained at the Houſe of Lords, the dinner is ſerved preciſely at the appointed time, for I never wait for any body."

As he finiſhed theſe words, he ſeemed ſwelling with ſelf-importance; but he recollected he was to be condeſcending, ſo he put on a gracious ſmile, and, profoundly bowing, left the room.

To account for his ſudden appearance, and the motives that induced him to be ſo very condeſcending, what had previouſly

viouſly paſſed in Groſvenor Square muſt be related.

It may eaſily be ſuppoſed, that Fame had not been ſilent concerning the legacy: every circumſtance of it, told a hundred different ways, had long ſince reached the ears of the Wilmington family; but the Ladies had ſo many important affairs on their hands, that they had ſcarcely attended to a matter ſo unintereſting to them, as the good luck of the Mourtrays.

Upon the Earl it made more impreſſion; becauſe it would add to the conſequence of a man whoſe influence he wiſhed to ſecure; for a rumour had generally prevailed, during the laſt week, of an immediate diſſolution of Parliament, which was an event that always produced a violent fermentation in his mind.

While

While he had been ſitting at breakfaſt that morning, pretending that he was reading the newſpapers, to avoid converſation, he had in reality been ruminating on election matters, and blaming his own want of foreſight, in not having redoubled his civilities to Mourtray; who, though poſſeſſed of only a ſmall eſtate, could command ſeveral votes, being extremely beloved and reſpected; and poſſeſſing, by a ſort of hereditary right, tranſmitted from a long race of anceſtors, much influence with ſeveral conſiderable freeholders.

In the borough, likewiſe, that Lord Wilmington had choſen to conſider as the entire property of the noble houſe of Fontelieu, Mourtray had ſo many friends, that, if he were diſpoſed to give his intereſt to Sir William Elliſton, who already ſeemed ſecure of carrying his own election, there was reaſon to apprehend that the Baronet, thus ſtrengthened, might

even preſume to conteſt his right to name the other member.

As ſoon, therefore, as he heard of Mourtray's late acquiſition, he reſolved inſtantly to write him a letter, full of flattery and congratulations; but, unfortunately, juſt at that time, his head was ſo puzzled by a variety of political ſchemes, that not only his intended letter, but what he had heard of the Mourtray's arrival, had eſcaped his memory. At that inſtant it ſuddenly recurred: he ſtarted; and, clapping his hand to his forehead,—"Pray," ſaid he, "did not I hear ſome of you ſay, that the Mourtrays either were in town, or ſhortly to come?"

"O, yes, papa;" cried Lady Bell, "they have been come ſome days."

"Have you ſeen them?" aſked he, haſtily.

"No:

"No: I can't ſay I have; for I have not yet had time to go to them."

"Then you have done very wrong; very wrong indeed, not to have called upon them! I thought Emma Mourtray was your deareſt friend."

"O! undoubtedly! that is to ſay, in the country, papa; but here, you know, it is quite a different thing: I have another ſet of friends."

"Really, I do not underſtand your diſtinctions: you talk of your friends as you do of your ſummer and winter clothes; and to lay aſide theſe, or thoſe, with equal unconcern."

"O! Indeed I ſhall be monſtrouſly happy to ſee Emma; but I am ſure, papa, I never ſuſpected that *you* cared a ſtraw about the Mourtrays."

" *You* never ſuſpected, indeed! How came you to be a competent judge," ſaid Lord Wilmington, angrily, " of what I care or do not care about? I tell *you*, Lady Iſabella, and all of you, that I am very ſorry, and quite ſhocked, that you have thus neglected theſe people."

" Upon my word, my Lord, to own the truth, I never thought about them!" ſaid the Counteſs, careleſsly.

" Nor I, truly!" ſaid Lady Elizabeth, with preciſely the ſame air.

" Then give me leave to tell you, Madam, it is by theſe neglectful ways," ſaid he, turning to Lady Wilmington, " that you undermine my intereſt in —— ſhire; and often, in one hour, undo what I have been months and years labouring to bring about."

Lady

Lady Wilmington, without replying to this ſpeech, ſaid, ſhe had rather a partiality to the girl, who was pretty and good-humoured, and really much ſuperior to the reſt of the odious natives in their neighbourhood."

"Odious natives!" echoed the Earl, "Odious natives! Now you would exactly uſe theſe very words, if twenty people were in the room, and though you knew they would be repeated where they would affront in the higheſt degree!"

"Why, ſurely, papa," ſaid Lady Elizabeth, "our vulgar neighbours are as deteſtable to you as to us?"

"No, no, no! None are deteſtable who will do as I pleaſe; and I charge you to be very guarded, when ſpeaking of every perſon or thing in the county.—But no more of this:—to make amends

for the paſt, I myſelf will call upon the Mourtrays this morning, and aſk them to dine here to-morrow."

"With all my heart," ſaid Lady Wilmington, "but, pray, let them underſtand, that we do not dine till ſix o'clock, or I ſhall have them here before I begin to dreſs."

"I would give ſomething," cried Lady Bell, as ſoon as her father had left the room, "to know what makes papa, ſuddenly, ſo wondrous civil."

"I cannot conceive," replied her ſiſter.

"Pſhaw!" ſaid Lady Wilmington, "it is ſome nonſenſical ſcheme about an election: I dare ſay he wants Mr. Mourtray's votes."

Lord Wilmington's extraordinary civilities had afforded as much cauſe of aſtoniſh-

aſtoniſhment to the Ladies in Wimpole Street as in Groſvenor Square; but, when Mourtray heard what had paſſed, as he knew the report reſpecting parliament, and had received ſeveral letters lately from the country, he eaſily accounted for the whole; keeping, however, his ſurmiſes to himſelf.

The next day a violent cold prevented Mrs. Mourtray from ſtirring out; ſo only Emma and her father went to Groſvenor Square. Lord Wilmington received them with ſuch an affectation of joy, and overwhelmed them with ſo many compliments, that Mourtray nearly loſt all patience; but, though Emma occaſionally ſeemed to fix his attention, he always pretended to be chiefly occupied with her father.

Lady Wilmington, who had been well tutored by her Lord, was likewiſe very gracious: Lady Elizabeth, in her cold

manner, made an effort to be civil; but Lady Bell expreſſed ſuch warmth of affection and pleaſure at ſeeing her dear friend, as appeared to her totally incomprehenſible, after her chilling note.

The fact was, Lady Bell, with little ſenſibility, was always decided by the caprice of the moment: when firſt ſhe heard of Emma's arrival, her head was full of a ball, to which ſhe was going at night; and ſo many projects had ſince occupied her, as to leave no room for any other ideas.

Now, when ſhe ſaw Emma, ſhe happened to be diſſatisfied with her ſiſter; who, for want of ſome body elſe, ſhe had made the repoſitory of many of her ſecrets; but no ſooner did ſhe ſee her rural friend, than it ſtruck her, that ſhe would make a much better confidante; and, longing to talk of herſelf, her conqueſts,

and

and her plans, a violent fit of affection came over her.

There were two other Ladies in the room, great friends of the Counteſs, whoſe characters were of that common ſort as to require no particular delineation; and one Gentleman, who had little remarkable, excepting an extraordinary ſhare of patience, which enabled him to liſten, for hours, to the Earl's diſcuſſions on politics.

But, at preſent, his ears were ſpared; for Lord Wilmington, having much curioſity to learn the real truth concerning Mourtray's acquiſition of fortune, drew him aſide, to gather from him a full detail of the whole; and he learned, not without ſecret ſatisfaction, that he was far from being yet in poſſeſſion of the Antigua eſtate: he diſguiſed this, however; and, with his ſpread hand on his breaſt, declared, upon his honour, the

ſincere pleaſure it gave him to hear, that the ancient and truly reſpectable family of the Mourtrays would now recover part of their wonted luſtre. Of his own views and ſchemes, in which he wanted Mourtray's aſſiſtance, he forbore to ſpeak till he had an opportunity of greater privacy.

Dinner was now announced; and nothing could aſtoniſh Emma more than the difference ſhe obſerved between Lady Wilmington in the country, and Lady Wilmington doing the honours of her table in town: ſhe was now perfectly well bred, attentive to her gueſts, cheerful, and taking her part in converſation: not ſitting mute, as uſed to be her general cuſtom, with her elbow reſting on the table, rather picking than eating any thing, becauſe ſhe affected ill health; often ſhrugging her ſhoulders, and looking croſs, becauſe ſome unfortunate man had thruſt his knife into his mouth, when

he

he ought to have uſed his fork; or had teazed her, by drinking her health; a ceremony ſhe abhorred.

Juſt after the removal of the ſoup, whilſt ſhe was helping the fiſh, ſhe ſuddenly aſked her Lord, whether he did not expect Lord Miramont?

"Yes; but you know I never wait for any body," was the reply.

"Ah! how unlucky!" thought Emma, "that he does not come! I ſhould have ſeen the fineſt man in town."

Before ſhe became ſo intimate with Lady Bell, ſhe had taken her idea of a fine Gentleman from the accounts ſhe had read, with Du Maſſon, of Louis the Fourteenth, and his court, and adapted him to her own country, according to the model of Sir Charles Grandiſon, only depriving him of a wig, a full-dreſſed

coat, and a ſword. But though Lady Bell had rectified her notions on this head to a great degree, and prepared her to ſee a very negligent ſtyle of dreſs, ſhe ſtill expected to find ſomething very ſtriking in a fine man, eſpecially in his manners.

The firſt courſe was juſt removed, and the ſecond placed upon the table, when the door opened, and in ſtalked a tall handſome young man; who, juſt nodding his head to the Earl, flung himſelf into the vacant chair, by the ſide of the Counteſs.

"Faith! I did not think it had been ſo late," ſaid he, ſettling himſelf at the table.

"O! you never know hours," cried Lord Wilmington. "What does your Lordſhip chooſe to eat?"

"What

" What I can get," anſwered the other, with a ſmile; well knowing that it was contrary to rule, in that houſe, to have any diſh brought back again; therefore, contenting himſelf with what he found, without uttering another word, he began eating with great diſpatch (as he was ſo much behind hand with the reſt of the company), and with too much eagerneſs to obſerve who was at the table.

Meanwhile Emma, who had dined, had full leiſure to obſerve him: his face and figure ſtruck her as the handſomeſt ſhe had ever ſeen; but her ſurprize was inexpreſſible at his ſlovenly dreſs and inattentive manners. She wondered how he had ventured to appear before Lady Wilmington, ſo fine and delicate herſelf, with his hair uncombed and ſcratched different ways, and in pantaloons! Although the faſhion of thick neck-cloths was not unknown to her, the ſtranger's was ſo very enormous, and ſhe obſerved

ſo

ſo many waiſtcoats peeping from underneath his coat, that, in deſpite of his good looks, ſhe concluded he was labouring under ſome ſevere rheumatic complaint.

Lady Bell, who ſat next to her, now ſaid, in a half whiſper—"Is not Miramont charming? How knowing he looks!"

"Why really," replied Emma, "I cannot conceive how you diſcover this at preſent; though, I ſuppoſe, he has had ſome education."

"Education!" exclaimed Lady Bell: "yes, yes; Lady Fredville has long ſince undertaken the care of that."

"It is a pity, then, ſhe does not faſhion him better."

"Lord!

"Lord! he is quite the thing; the go in every reſpect."

"Indeed!" cried Emma: "all this is far beyond my comprehenſion: but who is Lady Fred . . ."

"Huſh, huſh!" interrupting her, ſaid Lady Bell: "mamma looks grave; ſhe is watching me; another time I will tell you more."

The deſſert was now brought, and Lord Miramont, being unoccupied, began to look about him: his eyes reſted on Emma with an expreſſion of wonder and delight, which made her bluſh; and ſhe heard him ſoftly aſk her name of the Counteſs, who very conciſely anſwered, Miſs Mourtray.

He then entered into a lively converſation with the Ladies, ſaying ſome jocoſe things, particularly to Lady Bell; but for-

forbore joining in diſcourſe with the men, becauſe Lord Wilmington was got deep into politics.

" You and I," ſaid he, addreſſing the Earl, " differ in our opinions, and I hate an argument. Let matters take what courſe they will, whilſt I have youth and health, nothing will affect me much."

" Pardon me, Lord Miramont; you will find the contrary; for if we do not ſucceed in deſtroying the French republic, we are not ſafe ourſelves; and it grieves me exceedingly to obſerve, in theſe critical times, how little your Lordſhip attends to the affairs of the nation: you never come down to the Houſe."

" I leave the affairs of the nation," ſaid Lord Miramont, laughing, " to ſuch wiſe heads as your's, Lord Wilmington, to ſettle. The Houſe is a confounded bore, whither I will go as ſeldom as poſſible;

ſible; but if there was any real danger to be apprehended from the French, every true Briton's arm and fortune, and mine amongſt the reſt, would be employed againſt them."

"Yet your Lordſhip is mighty fond of every thing in the French ſtyle. I wiſh your partiality may not extend to their opinions."

"My partiality is confined to their cooks, and to their taſte in houſes, furniture, and women's dreſs."

Lady Wilmington now aroſe, and the Ladies retired to their coffee.

"Do, pray, Lady Bell," ſaid Emma, as ſoon as ſhe could draw her aſide; "do, pray, explain what you hinted concerning Lady Fredville's undertaking Lord Miramont's education; for he appears, at leaſt, three or four-and-twenty."

"Your

" Your ignorance is extremely diverting," anſwered ſhe ; " but, upon ſecond thoughts, I ſhall leave to you this myſtery, and many others, to develope ; which you will eaſily do, when you have been amongſt us a little while."

Lady Wilmington now beckoned Emma to take a ſeat near her, that ſhe might learn the hiſtory of the legacy; and having a far better heart than her Lord, ſhe really felt pleaſed at the improvement of Emma's ſituation.

The Ladies had not been long in the drawing-room before they were joined by Lord Miramont, who gaily advanced, ſaying, " I have eſcaped from a curſed bore ; for they are talking below about election affairs, which I deteſt ſtill more than politics."

Then throwing himſelf down upon a ſofa, with one leg ſtretched out its full length,

length, he took out his tooth-pick caſe, and ſat ſome time attending to his teeth, without noticing any body in the room.

This was very ſpacious, at leaſt fifty feet long: Lady Wilmington ſat at one end of it, near the fire, engaged in diſcourſe with her friends; Lady Elizabeth was of this party, making fringe; and Emma, ſitting by Lady Bell, who was pouring out the coffee, at a little diſtance from the fire; which was exactly oppoſite to the ſofa occupied by Lord Miramont; who ſuddenly cried out, "Do come here, my dear Bell."

"Indeed I ſhan't; why can't you come to me?"

"I have been riding a match with Saunders this morning, and I am quite tired;" and, he added, yawning, "you are ſo good natured and compaſſionate, my

my ſweet couſin, that I know you will come."

"Well, pray," ſaid Lady Bell, approaching him, "what have you to ſay?"

"Who is that ſweet pretty girl, who looks ſo innocent and unlike you?"

"Innocent! and unlike me! How, ſavage, what do you mean by this pretty compliment?"

"O! I only mean that ſhe has not yet acquired that eaſy air, ſo diſtinguiſhed in you: but, once more, who is ſhe?"

"A neighbour of our's in the country; my mother told you her name."

"What, the devil, is ſhe your neighbour? Faith, now I know that, perhaps I may

I may come and paſs a month or two with you, during the dull time of ſummer, when nothing is to be done."

"O! you are mighty obliging; but, upon my word, I ſhall not be much flattered, ſhould you come, if to ſee Emma is your only attraction."

"Why, you know I have ſometimes had thoughts of being in love with you; but hitherto I have not had time."

"My dear Miramont, you have already ſo much on your hands," ſaid Lady Bell, archly, "that certainly you have no leiſure to think of us girls. Pray what are you going to do with yourſelf to night?"

"Lady Fredville is at home: ſhe gives a ſupper."

"O!

"O! then your deſtination is very clear."

"Pray can your friend talk?" ſaid Lord Miramont; "for I have not yet heard her voice."

"Yes, yes, ſhe can talk; but, poor thing, ſhe knows nothing of the world: you ſee ſhe wants forming."

"I ſhould not diſlike to undertake the taſk; yet, hang it, I had better let it alone; for if a man now ſays three words to a girl, ſhe immediately expects he is to propoſe to her; and marriage is not my vocation. But I wiſh, however, to be acquainted with Miſs Mourtray."

"Come, then, I will preſent you to her."

The ceremony of introduction over, Lord Miramont addreſſed himſelf equally to both Ladies.

"Pray," ſaid Lady Bell, "who won the match you rode this morning?"

"I won; and Saunders was curſed mad; he rode off in ſuch a fury, that I feared he had demoliſhed a poor hump-backed woman croſſing the road."

Lady Bell laughed; whilſt Emma exclaimed, "Good Heaven!"——"Don't be alarmed, Madam," ſaid he: "for I picked up the poor old ſoul, conveyed her ſafe home, and left her more pleaſed than ſorry at the accident.

"I proteſt, if I don't believe," ſaid Lady Bell, "that you took humpey *en croupe*."

"Well,"

"Well, ſuppoſe I had? Do you think I ſhould mind being laughed at, when a perſon's life was concerned?"

"But you were not the perſon who hurt her?"

"What ſignifies that? Saunders rode off and left her ſprawling on the road: I ſhould have been a brute if I had not taken care of her. So I carried her in my arms to her houſe, which was at no great diſtance."

The reſt of the Gentlemen now joined the Ladies; and tea being over, Mr. Mourtray and his daughter departed, loaded, as on their arrival, with Lord Wilmington's civilities, and apparently in high favour with the Counteſs.

On her return home, Emma related to her mother all the occurrences of the day;

day; but when ſhe ſpoke of Lord Miramont ſhe felt embarraſſed, not having clearly decided what opinion to form of him: his figure, however, dwelt on her mind.

CHAP. IX.

THE next morning Lady Bell came to ſee Emma: ſhe had walked to Wimpole Street, attended by her governeſs and a footman. Mrs. Mourtray being confined with her cold, Emma alone received her; and her behaviour now was as warm as it had formerly been in the country.

"Do you know," ſaid ſhe, "it was with difficulty I perſuaded mamma to let me walk here; for ſhe hates me to walk in the ſtreets: but, if I had my way, I would parade all the morning up and down the faſhionable ſide of Bond Street. —However, I was at laſt ſuffered to come to you, provided I took that clog Madame Du Plomb (for ſo Lady Bell always called Madame Duplin) with me. Thank God ſhe is rather deaf, and, beſides,

beſides, ſcarcely underſtands a word of Engliſh."

She now communicated to Emma, in a low voice, what ſhe called her ſecrets; matter too frivolous to be worth recording; and, having unburthened herſelf, ſhe proceeded to talk of her couſin Miramont.

"You know," ſaid ſhe, "he is mamma's nephew, and ſhe doats upon him. I believe ſhe would have been very glad had he ſhewn any wiſh to marry me, and rather expected he would, when firſt we returned from Ireland: but, ſtrange to tell, he ſeems to have no ſuch idea! But, for my part, I don't care about him; no, not at all, I aſſure you; though I think him very charming. My objection to him as a huſband is, that he is ſo ſelf-willed; I know he would be hard to manage.—He has been his own maſter almoſt from a child; for my uncle Miramont

ramont died when he was very young, and my aunt adored him to ſuch a degree, ſhe would never ſuffer him to be contradicted: ſo he ran wild about the town, and got into all ſorts of ſcrapes, being of a very daſhing turn.—My aunt died before he came of age, but long before that he had rendered himſelf famous for his gallantries with married women; and now, for theſe laſt ſix months, he has attached himſelf entirely to . . . "

Here Lady Bell was interrupted by Mrs. Prouting, who, affecting nimbleneſs, came flying up to Emma, ſhaking her hand with the ſame freedom as if ſhe had long been her moſt intimate friend.

This interruption Emma thought extremely provoking, and her curioſity remained unſatisfied; for Lady Bell could not ſtay. As ſhe departed, ſhe whiſpered—"Heaven and earth! how came you

you acquainted with that pretended fine lady?—the vulgareſt of creatures!"

Emma did not venture to anſwer; and, as ſoon as Lady Bell was gone, Mrs. Prouting broke out thus:—"*That* Lady Iſabella Fontelieu, is a moſt affected girl!"—when, ſeeing Emma look extremely diſpleaſed, ſhe added—"Excuſe me, Miſs Mourtray, for being ſo free ſpoken; I hope, however, ſhe is not a friend of your's.—How ſtrangely ſhe dreſſes! Every body ſtares at her wherever ſhe appears; but ſhe has a moſt undaunted countenance. I ſhould like, however, to know who makes her gowns."

Emma made no anſwer; and being little diſpoſed to converſe with Mrs. Prouting, the latter, finding nothing to amuſe her, took her leave, ſecretly rejoicing that chance had given her an opportunity minutely to examine the celebrated Lady Iſabella Fontelieu's dreſs,

that ſhe might exactly imitate it. No creature ever had ſo great a deſire to be a fine lady as ſhe unfortunately had, who had not a ſingle requiſite to make her one.

Two days after the dinner in Groſvenor Square, Lady Wilmington and Lady Bell called upon the Mourtrays; the former graciouſly preſented an opera ticket to Emma, ſaying, that as her eldeſt daughter was confined with a ſwelled face, ſhe had room for her in her box; and if ſhe choſe to come and dine with her, ſhe would carry her that evening to the opera, which would be very full and brilliant, being the benefit of a favourite dancer.

The propoſal was thankfully accepted, and Mrs. Mourtray made no oppoſition; for, beſides that her cold ſtill continued bad, ſhe felt ſenſible that ſhe muſt accuſtom herſelf to ſee Emma in town, as ſhe

ſhe had been in the country, the ſole object of Lady Wilmington's favour.

Yet, conſcious of her newly-acquired riches, ſhe felt more at her eaſe in the preſence of the haughty Counteſs than ever ſhe had before: on the ſtrength of theſe ſhe talked to her of her affairs, preſuming ſhe muſt, on account of her daughter, take ſome intereſt in them, and, throughout the whole of the viſit, endeavoured to converſe with her with a degree of freedom which (though extremely well born herſelf) ſhe never durſt venture, when depreſſed with the conſciouſneſs of her narrow fortune.

Lady Wilmington liſtened to all ſhe ſaid with a careleſs, abſent air; ſcarcely uttered three ſyllables; and whilſt ſhe was yet ſpeaking, abruptly roſe to depart.

None of the various mortifications ſhe had before inflicted on Mrs. Mourtray

gave her ſo much offence as this behaviour; for, beſides the total indifference it ſhewed in her concerns, ſhe never could underſtand that what ſhe took ſo much pleaſure in relating any body could be tired of hearing.

Lady Bell, who ſaw her colour with anger, ſqueezed her hand kindly at parting, and proteſted that, in deſpite of her cold, ſhe looked quite handſome, now that ſhe dreſſed in the faſhion.

"That young lady," ſaid Mrs. Mourtray, ſhutting the door after Lady Bell, "is very wild, but good natured: her mother is more inſufferable than ever."

Emma made no anſwer; the opera ticket had won her heart; for that, however, ſhe was indebted to Lord Wilmington, who inſiſted upon Lady Wilmington's giving it to her.

The

The dinner party in Groſvenor Square was confined to the family and Lord Miramont, who dined there almoſt every day: he had been at court in the morning; but though he had changed his clothes, he had omitted to diſhevel his hair, ſo that he now had entirely the appearance of a man of faſhion: and as he was extremely pleaſant and agreeable, without, however, poſſeſſing, in the ſlighteſt degree, thoſe highly poliſhed manners that Emma had once ſettled in her own mind as indiſpenſable in a well-bred man, ſhe began to ſuppoſe that thoſe had been exploded, as formal and troubleſome: yet ſhe could not help thinking that even Lord Miramont would appear to greater advantage if he were as polite and attentive as either her father or Sydney.

The Ladies never ſitting long after dinner, and Lady Wilmington ſeldom going to the opera till very late, ſhe propoſed, after coffee, to have a little muſic,

and desired Lord Miramont to sing with his cousin Bell some beautiful duos of Jackson's. He sung a second charmingly; her voice was very fine; and Emma, who loved music passionately, was all ear.

The fine figure of this young Marquis; a certain grace that seemed natural to him, and which appeared more striking now that his person was not disfigured by neglect; his exquisite taste in music, and his good humour, soon interested Emma in his favour. Those little defects that she had perceived at first, as well as the hints Lady Bell had given of his irregularities, insensibly were forgotten; whilst she dwelt with approbation on the good-nature and humanity he had manifested in regard to the hump-backed woman.

Lord Miramont now departed, and the Ladies went to the Haymarket. As Emma had

had never heard music, excepting in private performances, ſhe was ſo enchanted to hear it in ſuch perfection at the opera, and ſo delighted with the novelty and ſplendour of the *ſpectacle*, that, at firſt, her eyes were rivetted to the ſtage; till recollecting that ſhe had not heard Lord Miramont ſay whether ſhe ſhould go to the opera, a ſentiment, which ſhe imagined to be curioſity, induced her to aſk Lady Bell if he often attended it?

"Never miſſes, at leaſt, coming in time to ſee the laſt dance."

"Is he, then, who is ſo excellent a muſician himſelf, indifferent to all but dancing?"

"Oh, he loves muſic very much, and ſo do I; but nobody comes to the opera for the ſake of *that*:—but if you wiſh to ſee him, there he is, oppoſite to you, with his dear Lady Fredville."

"She seems handsome," said Emma; "but at this distance she appears to me old."

"She is above forty; but that's no matter; this is the reign of old women; they have more lovers than the young ones."

"Impossible!—this, Lady Bell, is one of your jokes.—Lady Fredville, I conclude, is a widow."

"A widow!—dear, no; her lord is sitting in the back of the box."

"Good Heaven! a married woman!"

"Why, do you suppose that being married prevents a woman from having lovers? It is just the contrary, I assure you."

Emma was much ſhocked, though ſhe firmly believed that Lady Bell, in her light way, miſrepreſented things; ſtill ſhe felt pained that Lord Miramont, of whom ſhe wiſhed to think well, ſhould have even the appearance of impropriety in his conduct. Whilſt ſhe was meditating on this point, ſhe ſuddenly miſſed him from the ſpot whither her eyes had been invariably directed; and ſhe concluded he was coming to Lady Wilmington's box.

Preſently after, ſhe heard the door behind her open; and not daring to look round, becauſe ſhe felt herſelf bluſh at the idea of ſeeing Lord Miramont, without being able to define whence her emotion aroſe, ſhe remained immoveably turned towards the ſtage, till a loud rough voice, which ſhe inſtantly knew to be that of Chowles, ſaluted her ears with —"Servant, Ladies, ſervant:—So, Miſs Mountray, I've found you at laſt; and a fine hunt I've had after you!"

"After

"After me, Sir!" cried Emma, provoked at this familiarity: "I am sure, Mr. Chowles, I did not wish you should give yourself this trouble."

When, looking towards the Countess, not without some apprehension of the effects of this intrusion, she perceived her head had risen some inches higher, and that anger and amazement were depicted on her countenance; and, by a side glance at Lady Bell, that the muscles of her face were working to stifle a violent fit of laughter.

Chowles, in the mean while, totally unconcerned, drew a vacant chair, and wedged it as close as he could between Lady Wilmington's and Emma's, his broad face leaning over their shoulders; when, finding himself seated to his mind, he began his remarks on the opera, perfectly at his ease, and seemingly without

observ-

obſerving that he had all the converſation to himſelf.

A circumſtance ſo new and unprecedented, as a ſtranger's preſuming to force himſelf into a place ſo ſacred as her box, ſeemed to deprive the Counteſs of all her faculties; therefore, from the inſtant he had ſeated himſelf, excepting drawing up her gown, and exclaiming, "Sir! Sir!" with a toſs of her head, her mouth remained cloſely purſed up, and her eyes diſtended with aſtoniſhment.

"Pray, my Lady," ſaid the undaunted Chowles, "do you now underſtand what thoſe there ſqualling gentry ſay?"

No anſwer from Lady Wilmington; only her eye-brows roſe a little higher.—He then repeated his queſtion in a louder key, chooſing to ſuppoſe her Ladyſhip deaf.

But

But Emma, who well knew that ſhe would not deign to anſwer him, now ſaid, ſoftly—"Lady Wilmington attends to the muſic, Sir, and ſhe does not like people ſhould talk to her during the performance."

She had not, however, courage to add, that his company could well be diſpenſed with.

At that inſtant Lord Miramont entered the box, to the great relief of his aunt; who, with a ſignificant ſhrug of her ſhoulders, and ſide glance at Chowles, complained of his intolerable intruſion; as, likewiſe, of her daughter's abſurdity; for, to her utter ſurprize, Lady Bell was juſt then deeply engaged in admiring a ring, which Chowles, with his little finger thruſt out, deſired her to obſerve; ſaying, "It is a very curious *antick*, I aſſure you."

But

But ſo far from meeting in Lord Miramont the feelings ſhe expected, the ſight of ſo odd a figure ſtuck cloſe to her, and the miſery it occaſioned, ſtruck him only in a ludicrous light; and joining with Lady Bell, whom the whole ſcene diverted extremely, he alſo began to *quiz* him: whilſt poor Emma, mortified to appear the acquaintance of this object of ridicule, now felt chagrined at the arrival of the Marquis, for which before ſhe had ſecretly longed.

As for Chowles, ſince he had been encouraged by Lord Miramont and Lady Bell, he ſeemed to have acquired additional ſpirits as well as courage; for, ſeeing Lady Wilmington with her ſnuff-box open in her hand, he ſuddenly introduced into it his finger and thumb; uſing no further ceremony than ſaying, "With your leave, my Lady."

This

This freedom was more than ſhe poſſibly could endure; and ſhe was on the point of giving vent to her wrath, but ſhe checked herſelf; and, turning to her nephew—"Do, pray," ſaid ſhe, "give this box to the man at the door, and tell him to fling away the contents."

"Very right, perfectly right," cried Chowles, with the greateſt compoſure; "I thought it dry and bad. Will your Ladyſhip try ſome of my blackguard; 'tis of the right ſort, I aſſure you;" producing a very large gold box, ſet round with brilliants.

"No, Sir, no;" cried Lady Wilmington, in a loud angry voice; "I hate blackguard, and every ſort of blackguard."

"Do you, really?" ſaid Chowles, who ſeemed not at all to ſuppoſe any thing perſonal to himſelf was meant by this ſpeech:

ſpeech: "Well, luckily, I can accommodate you with ſome excellent rappee."

"You can only accommodate me one way, Sir," ſaid Lady Wilmington, whom rage, in deſpite of herſelf, impelled to ſpeak; but he no longer heard her; for, juſt then, looking down into the pit, he diſcovered his couſins, the Proutings: "O ho! there they are," cried he; "I proteſt I muſt go and ſpeak to them; but I will be back in a few minutes."

"Was ever aſſurance equal to this fellow's!" exclaimed Lady Wilmington, as he left the box. "Pray, Miſs Mourtray, who is this man, and how did he dare to ſet his foot in my box?"

"He is an acquaintance of my father's, Madam," replied ſhe, trembling at the impending ſtorm; "and I ſuppoſe he did not know..."

"You

"You ſuppoſe, indeed!" interrupted Lady Wilmington; "I ſhould like to know, whether you ſuppoſe *that* gives him a right to obtrude his company upon me?"

"No, indeed, Madam; I am ſure I was very ſorry when he came; and extremely ſhocked you ſhould be troubled with him."

"Pray, then, why did not you inſtantly tell him, that he neither ought nor could ſtay here? This box, I would have you to underſtand, is my private property. But, I promiſe you, ſince you have ſuch ſtrange, low-bred acquaintance, I ſhall take care not again to expoſe myſelf to their impertinence by taking you out with me."

Emma, extremely hurt and abaſhed, held her head down, her eyes filling with tears; which Lord Miramont perceiving, he

he ſaid—"Now, my dear Lady Wilmington, how can you be ſo unjuſt to impute any blame to Miſs Mourtray on this occaſion? You could not expect ſhe ſhould tell this man to leave your box; and it was mere ignorance that brought him into it."

"Then he ſhould be taught better," ſaid Lady Wilmington, ſtill very angry; "but there appeared to me full as much inſolence as ignorance in the whole of his behaviour."

"Your Ladyſhip cannot, at leaſt, be accuſed of having neglected to teach him better; for your looks and manners conveyed pretty forcible reproofs."

"Not half ſtrong enough, I conclude; for he did not ſeem to notice them; and I certainly ſhould have bid him depart, if, by holding any converſe with ſuch a fellow,

low, I ſhould not have demeaned myſelf."

"Well, I muſt ſay, I ſaw nothing but matter for laughter in the whole affair."

"Very poſſibly; becauſe you and Bell (whoſe behaviour to-night I ſhall not eaſily forget) are mighty ingenious in finding jokes out of nothing; and generally laugh when you ought to look grave. But this is the laughing age; young people now do nothing elſe but laugh; the decorum of former times is become obſolete; hence low people take liberties with their ſuperiors, unheard of before this levelling age."

"Now, my dear Mamma, how was it poſſible to avoid laughing at ſuch a *quiz*?" ſaid Lady Bell.

"Very

"Very poſſible: did you ſee me laugh?" Then turning to Emma, ſhe ſaid, "I am not ſurprized that you ſhould feel concerned at what has happened; however, ſince it cannot be remedied, compoſe yourſelf; and only remember, in future, Miſs Mourtray, that when I invite you to be of any party with me, poſitively I exclude all your acquaintance."

Emma inarticulately attempted to expreſs her regret at this unfortunate circumſtance, and was adding ſomething very ſubmiſſive; but Lord Miramont interrupted her—"Pooh, pooh, do not let this nonſenſe vex you, Miſs Mourtray; 'tis not worth a thought."

"That is as you think," ſaid Lady Wilmington, gravely; "but I am of a different opinion; for, really, to have ſuch a man ſtuck up by me during half the opera, is, indeed, too bad."

Lord

Lord Miramont now, to diſſipate her diſpleaſure, adroitly ſtarted ſubjects he knew to be agreeable to her; and, after ſome rubs, he ſucceeding in reſtoring her to good humour.

His aim had not been loſt upon Emma, and it ſtrengthened the opinion ſhe had already formed of his good nature: faſcinated by his exterior, ſhe readily gave him credit for numberleſs good qualities, and ſtudiouſly tried to believe him free from whatever faults were imputed to him. But, whilſt ſhe was giving her whole attention to his lively converſation, the dance ceaſed, and in an inſtant he was gone, to her no ſmall ſurprize and diſappointment; for ſhe had concluded he would ſee his relations to their carriage; inſtead of which ſhe met him in the paſſage, with Lady Fredville leaning on his arm, as Lady Wilmington was hurrying out of the houſe, in no ſmall dread of Chowles's joining her; whom

ſhe

ſhe perceived working hard to make his way through the crowd, apparently with this intention.

Emma learned, on her return home, that Chowles had made Mrs. Mourtray a viſit early in the evening; and, upon hearing that ſhe was gone to the opera, ſaid he would go too.

"And, moſt unfortunately for me, he came!" ſaid Emma; and ſhe related all that had paſſed.

"Upon my word," ſaid Mrs. Mourtray, "I cannot ſee that Mr. Chowles was to blame. In a public place, as every perſon pays alike, he thought, I ſuppoſe, all parts of the houſe free to him; and what mighty harm could the poor man do Lady Wilmington? But I know ſhe is the proudeſt woman in the world. Depend upon it, Mr. Chowles will be a much more uſeful acquaintance

to us than that fine Lady; and, as I am pretty well recovered of my cold, I have promiſed to make a party with him and his couſins at the play to-morrow."

This declaration did not contribute to raiſe Emma's ſpirits, already depreſſed; but ſhe did not venture to make any objection to the ſcheme.

CHAP. X.

EARLY the following morning the family in Wimpole Street were agreeably ſurprized by the arrival of Henry Mourtray, whom they had not expected for ſome days: he had juſt taken his final leave of college; and, as he was to ſtudy the law, his father intended to place him in Chambers, near the Temple, under the care of an eminent Lawyer; but, although he had himſelf choſen this profeſſion, he ſhewed ſo much diſtaſte to it, as ſoon as he heard of this arrangement, and his mother exclaimed ſo loudly at the barbarity of burying a young man, with his expectations, in ſuch an out-of-the-way place, that Mourtray, averſe to argument, acquieſced with his wife's propoſal, that he ſhould reſide with them; where, ſhe affirmed, he could ſtudy equally well, if ſtudy he muſt; for which ſhe ſaw

no greater neceſſity than did her ſon; but Mourtray would not give up this point, inſiſting that idleneſs would be his ruin.

Henry reſembled his mother extremely in countenance, and ſomewhat in diſpoſition, only he had quicker parts, and much ſtronger paſſions. Averſe to every ſort of application, impatient of controul, prone to anger, fond to exceſs of pleaſure, vain, and extravagant, he rejoiced at being emancipated from the ſtrict rules of a college life; and, with a handſome perſon, he flattered himſelf he ſhould cut no deſpicable figure in the world of faſhion.

He already knew much of the town; for, during the long vacation, when his father thought he was gone on a tour to the north with a friend, who promiſed to bear his expences, he had been, moſt part of the time, in London, indulging himſelf

himſelf in amuſements better ſuited to his taſte, than gaining any information by travel.

His friend, who was exactly congenial to him, had practiſed the ſame deception on his father,—a rich old man, whoſe habitation was ſtill further removed from London than Downton, where he believed his ſon to be; and as he liberally ſupplied him with money, the young man as liberally ſupplied Henry; but, as two muſt naturally want more than one, when the old Gentleman's allowance was expended, the young one, who was ſecure of a good eſtate hereafter, found reſources with the Jews.

It may eaſily, therefore, be imagined, that Henry received the news of the legacy, of which he purpoſed to poſſeſs by far the greater ſhare himſelf, with exceſſive tranſports of joy; and Mrs. Mourtray, delighted beyond meaſure that ſhe

ſhould now have him always with her, was diſpoſed, in the firſt moments of their meeting, with her uſual garrulity, to open to him all the joys and comforts ſhe had in ſtore, in conſequence of her improved circumſtances; but Henry had no time to attend to her, for he had many important concerns to ſettle before he appeared in public.

Never having ſeen Mr. Chowles, nor Mr. and Mrs. Prouting, whom he concluded to be faſhionable people, he thought it neceſſary to impreſs theſe ſtrangers with a favourable opinion of his perſon, as he learned his family were to go with them in the evening to the play; therefore, inſtead of ſuffering his parents to enjoy his ſociety, from whom he had been ſo long abſent, his hair-dreſſer and tailor engroſſed almoſt all his time till he went to the theatre; where, however, himſelf and family did not arrive till the ſecond act of the play.

Chowles,

Chowles, and his party, had been ſtationed in the box even before the drawing up of the curtain; and Henry's aſtoniſhment, when he ſaw the people who had partly been the cauſe of his taking ſo much pains with his perſon, was viſible on his mortified countenance. "My God! Siſter," ſaid he, ſoftly, to Emma, "can that fat, horrid-dreſſed man be the Mr. Chowles, of whoſe magnificence I have heard ſo much from my mother? Why, it is a diſgrace to be ſeen with ſuch figures as he and his couſins."

"Be ſilent, for Heaven's ſake!" ſaid Emma, apprehenſive he ſhould be heard: "Mamma is extremely partial to them; and my father, in regard to the legacy ....."

"Ah! that charming legacy!" interrupted Henry: "that couſin of our's was an excellent fellow!—Between you and

I, though I did not tell the old folks ſo, I don't intend to bother my brains with law. No, no: I can do without it."

"Old folks!" repeated Emma, "Dear, Henry! what a term, when ſpeaking of our good parents!"

"Nonſenſe! You would not have me call them the young folks, I hope?"

"Let us attend to the play," ſaid Emma.

"Moral, ſentimental ſtuff, that I deteſt; but I have much better ſport in view.—Look in the ſtage box: you will ſee a beautiful creature, whoſe eyes ſeem fixed upon us: I think I have ſome recollection of her face."

"'Tis Lady Iſabella Fontelieu," ſaid Emma, "with a party unknown to me."

Henry

Henry now could think nor talk of any thing but Lady Bell; and Emma was equally attracted towards the ſtage box by another cauſe; for, in a corner of it, ſhe perceived Lord Miramont!—A thouſand hopes and fears now filled her mind: ſometimes ſhe thought he would croſs the houſe, and come and ſpeak to her: then ſhe apprehended, that part of her company might diſguſt him from approaching her. Whilſt ſhe was thus wavering in opinion, Chowles, unobſerved by her, was tearing an orange in quarters: which done, he held them in his ſpread hand, deſiring ſhe would take ſome; and though ſhe declined the offer, he continued importunate in preſſing it.

At that inſtant ſhe perceived Lord Miramont had emerged from his corner, and was ſtanding behind his couſin, both of them whiſpering and laughing, with their eyes fixed upon her and Chowles. Nothing could be more mortifying to her

than this circumſtance; and Chowles now, for the firſt time, obſerved them.

"Odſo!" cried he, "there is the pretty young Lady, and the merry Gentleman, who were ſo funny at the opera!" And he began bowing and nodding very familiarly to them; but Lady Bell, not being at all in an affable mood, made him a very ſlight courteſy, and ſcarcely noticed Emma. Lord Miramont bowed to each.

Much diſcompoſed, and to relieve herſelf from Chowles's diſagreeable attentions, Emma turned away her head, poſitively determined not to exchange another word with him.

As ſoon as the play was over, Lady Bell, her party, and Lord Miramont, left the houſe; and Emma's hopes being thus diſappointed, in regard to the latter, ſhe felt more vexed and chagrined than ever.

She

She now loſt all inclination to ſee the farce, though all theatrical amuſements were new to her; but there was no poſſibility of retiring, as neither Mrs. Mourtray, nor Chowles, would, upon any account, have omitted ſeeing the whole.

Henry Mourtray, almoſt as tired as his ſiſter of his company, had long ſince ſlipped away, and he returned no more.

Juſt before the concluſion of the farce, Sydney came into the box: he expreſſed the greateſt pleaſure at ſeeing the Mourtrays: ſaid he had only arrived in town that evening, or ſhould have done himſelf the honour of calling upon them; and, ſeeing the houſe beginning to thin, he offered to call for their ſervants.

Mrs. Mourtray, with whom he was by no means a favourite, would have declined his civilities; but Chowles ſaid,

" Ay, ay; let the Gentleman go, for I am monſtrous hot; and, hark'ee, Sir, when you aſk for Mr. Mourtray's carriage, ſpeak a word for mine: my name is Chowles, at your ſervice."

Emma, aſhamed of his vulgarity and aſſurance, uttered, in a low voice, ſome apology for him to Sydney, who only ſmiled as he left the box; but ſhe, unable any longer to contain her diſpleaſure, broke through her reſolution of continuing ſilent:—" That Gentleman, Mr. Chowles," ſaid ſhe, " whom you ſo unceremoniouſly employ to call your carriage, is Mr. Sydney, Lady Clannarmon's ſon."

" Well, and what of that, my pretty nut-brown?" for, of late, he had taken the liberty thus to denominate her.

" My name, Sir, is Mourtray; and I requeſt you will be ſo good to remember

ber this, when you addreſs yourſelf to me."

"Bleſs me!" cried Mrs. Mourtray, "what ails the girl? She is getting as proud and formal as Lady Wilmington herſelf."

"Ay, that's the good," cried Chowles, "of mixing with quality! I proteſt my poor brain never can remember (no offence, I hope, couſin Prouting); my poor brain, I ſay, never can remember all the forms required by your Honourables and Right Honourables.—I ſuppoſe that chap, too, is one of them ſort of folks, or elſe Miſs Mourtray would not have been angry with me juſt now."

Sydney's return put an end to the converſation. Chowles took charge of Mrs. Mourtray, followed by her huſband and the Proutings, and Sydney offered his arm to Emma; but, as they had a little way

to

to walk to get to the carriage, the latter had time to ſatisfy his curioſity relative to her party; and, having ſeen her ſafely ſeated in the coach, took his leave.

Emma could not help acknowledging to herſelf, how infinitely he had the advantage of the Marquis in point of manners; and, perhaps, being piqued with the latter for not having come to her box, ſhe did juſtice to Sydney with the leſs reluctance.

Mrs. Mourtray did not paſs over in ſilence her daughter's behaviour to Chowles, which ſhe condemned with ſome degree of aſperity; but Mourtray took the part of Emma, obſerving, that his forward, ill-bred manners, muſt naturally have the effect of diſguſting every perſon of delicacy; and added, that he approved of her prohibiting the familiarity of his addreſs.

"For my part," ſaid Mrs. Mourtray, "I have no notion of people's being encouraged in pride."

"Nobody has more," ſaid he, "than Chowles himſelf; but his is the dirty pride of over-grown wealth."

"Well, I ſee nothing of this: the poor man is very good natured, eaſy, and chatty; and I like him extremely. But, pray, did you obſerve that Lady Bell Fontelieu courteſied to all of us, with a doubtful ſort of air, as if ſhe did not know us?"

"I noticed her little," anſwered Mourtray, "but I can eaſily believe ſo fine a Lady was not particularly anxious to acknowledge us for her acquaintance to-night." Then, taking Emma's hand, "My dear girl," ſaid he, "retain your amiable, natural manners, and never let example lead you into affectation. Be civil, but not

not ſervile; unite humility with the dignity of virtue; and calmly, but reſolutely, reſiſt preſumption."

A fortnight now paſſed without any particular occurrence. Mrs. Mourtray, being completely eſtabliſhed in town, buſied herſelf in enquiries how all thoſe of her former acquaintance, who had not yet waited upon her, were diſpoſed of. After an abſence of more than twenty years, great changes, of courſe, muſt have happened amongſt them; and ſhe found the numbers of thoſe ſhe had once known much reduced.

But thoſe few that remained were very ready to renew acquaintance with her, and to introduce her to all their's, eſpecially after they learned the improvement of her circumſtances; therefore, in a ſhort time, ſhe had more engagements than ſhe could fulfil. Nothing, however, interrupted her intimacy with Chowles and his

his relations, with whom ſhe formed frequent parties; but Mourtray ſeldom (and Emma always reluctantly) aſſociated with theſe people, merely to oblige her.

The latter frequently ſaw Lady Iſabella, and ſometimes met the Wilmington family; but the Counteſs, ever ſince the unpleaſant ſcene at the opera, had honoured her with no further invitations. She met, occaſionally, with Lord Miramont, in public, who always noticed her, though ſometimes only with a nod; but when, without his ſeeking, an opportunity preſented itſelf for him to ſpeak to her, he was gay, civil, and good-humoured; yet he never gave himſelf the trouble to pay her any particular attentions.

This was a grievous mortification to Emma, who felt, from the firſt moment ſhe ſaw him, a ſecret partiality in his favour, which each ſubſequent meeting increaſed, though ſhe herſelf was far from being

being conſcious that he had made ſo deep an impreſſion upon her heart.—Perhaps, too, her vanity, that inherent defect in her character, which the admiration ſhe excited wherever ſhe appeared did not tend to correct, was as much wounded as her ſenſibility by the indifference of the Marquis.

Sydney, in the mean while, was induſtrious to find opportunities of ſeeing her in public, as Mrs. Mourtray ſeldom allowed him admittance into her houſe: if he could even only ſee his adored Emma, at a diſtance, he felt delighted; but when he could exchange a word with her, or be of the leaſt uſe in getting her a ſeat, or in aſſiſting her to her carriage, or in performing any little commiſſion, then his joy became exceſſive; but ſtill he was far too timid to ſuffer his lips to betray the ſecret of his heart.

As for Emma, she behaved to him exactly in town as she had done in the country; she even esteemed him more, in consequence of knowing him better; but the idea of ever considering him in any other light than as a friend never occurred to her as possible.

Her father, who perfectly developed not only what passed in her mind, but also in that of Sydney (seldom as he saw him), and who had formed the highest opinion of the excellence of his disposition, from the account he had heard of his conduct towards his brother, secretly wished that he might gain Emma's affections; though, from the observations he made relative to her sentiments, he scarcely dared flatter himself this would ever happen.

Mourtray, with many a sigh, contrasted the character of Sydney with that of his son;

ſon; who, ſince his arrival in town, ſo far from giving a few hours, even in a morning, to ſtudy, rarely looked into a book; and, indeed, was to be found any where elſe ſooner than in his parents' houſe. When not lounging in the ſtreets, his time was ſtill worſe employed; and, though his father did not know exactly how, he had every reaſon to believe, from the hours he kept, that he was engaged in a career of folly, if not of vice.

Hitherto Mourtray, with his uſual mildneſs, had only occaſionally hinted his diſapprobation of his proceedings, to which Henry negligently attended; and as his mother never failed in having an apology ready for him, he often forbore making any for himſelf.

Whilſt each individual of his family was purſuing his or her different amuſe-

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ments, Mourtray himſelf was much perplexed with his affairs; the opinions of the lawyers were divided concerning his title to the eſtate bequeathed him; and he was at times almoſt tempted, when ſome new difficulty was ſtarted, to leave Mr. Elward in the peaceable poſſeſſion of it: but then Chowles, who pretended to know more about the eſtate than any body elſe, would vehemently exclaim at the abſurdity of a man, not extremely rich and charged with a family, renouncing ſo valuable a property, to which he had an undoubted right; offering himſelf to put the buſineſs into ſuch hands in the iſland, as would infallibly gain the ſuit; eagerly recommending it to be ſet on foot without delay, and to ſpare no expenſe to gain what he ventured to affirm would hereafter amply repay him.

Sometimes Chowles's arguments nearly prevailed; and Mourtray was on the point

point of deſiring him to give the neceſſary directions to his agents in Antigua to renew the ſuit; but then, again, his natural irreſolution preponderated, and he dropped the ſubject for the preſent; till, further urged by Chowles and Sharp, the other executor, he again liſtened to the various ſchemes they propoſed, without adopting any of them.

One of theſe, however, that concerned part of the money in Chowles's hands, after much indeciſion, he was at laſt, by this man's addreſs, induced to adopt. It was to advance ten thouſand pounds in a ſecret commercial ſpeculation; for which, during three years, he was to receive a very low intereſt; but, at the end of that period, Chowles clearly demonſtrated it would produce, with a like ſum advanced by himſelf, to both an enormous profit.

Occu-

Occupied, however, as Mourtray was with his intricate concerns abroad, he did not neglect thoſe at home. Downton, that object of his predilection, required eſſential repairs; for the decayed ſtate of the houſe had long rendered it dangerous to inhabit.

A man, who was a ſurveyor, but who dabbled in architecture, gardening, and farming, recommended by the officious Chowles, was ſent down to examine what was neceſſary to be done, and make his report of the capabilities of the place.

On his return, he produced a plan and eſtimate, apparently not unreaſonable; which, with leſs than his uſual heſitation, Mourtray conſented to have accordingly executed. But this man, being a very confident and expeditious genius, conſulting more his own intereſt than either

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that or the wiſhes of his employer, immediately ſet about pulling and cutting down here, building and planting there, in a manner little dreamt of by poor Mourtray, and at an expenſe far exceeding the original agreement.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

LADY Bell ſtill continued to profeſs the moſt ardent friendſhip for Emma; but all her fondneſs did not prevent her treating her, at times, when they met, with diſtant coldneſs, if ſhe happened then to be ſurrounded by people of the ton.

A ſlight indiſpoſition having confined her for ſome days at home, as ſoon as ſhe recovered, ſhe frequently aſked Emma to walk with her in the Park; for ſhe had coaxed her mother's confidential phyſician to preſcribe exerciſe for her, as abſolutely neceſſary to her health; and, accompanied by Madame Duplin, ſhe was permitted to walk as much as ſhe pleaſed. Attention to her health was the oſtenſible motive of this ſudden inclination for exerciſe; but *that* which really actuated her, ſhe hoped to keep concealed.

In theſe walks, two ſuch lovely girls as Lady Bell and Emma were ſure to be joined by ſeveral men; ſome accompanied them moſt of the time they ſtaid in the Park; others occaſionally took a turn or two with them; but there was one perſon who ſeldom quitted them.

This was a Lieutenant in the Guards, of the name of Darnford; whoſe chief recommendation ſeemed to be large black eyes, a fine ſhewy figure, and an immenſe ſtock of aſſurance.

Emma ſaw, with concern, his aſſiduity in attending on her friend; ſhe ventured even to hint that it was improper to encourage him; but Lady Bell, who only laughed at what ſhe called abſurd prudery, diſregarded her advice, and always, at parting, ſaid to him—"Well, we ſhall meet again to-morrow. Pray for fair weather."

In vain Emma conjured her not thus to make aſſignations with Captain Darnford; ſhe would not attend to her; therefore, though ſenſible this meaſure would violently offend Lady Bell, Emma refuſed to accompany her any more. Regard for her own character, as well as the hope of putting an end to theſe parties, dictated her refuſal; beſides, ſhe conſidered herſelf as under obligations to Lady Wilmington; and the Earl, of late, had manifeſted a very friendly diſpoſition towards her father: gratitude, then, as well as honour, rendered it impoſſible ſhe could countenance, by her preſence, meetings that Lady Bell owned to be clandeſtine.

The latter, having ineffectually exerted all her eloquence to ſhake Emma's reſolution, reſented it at firſt moſt violently; but, finding amongſt her acquaintance ſome accommodating companions, ſhe ceaſed to importune her, though from that moment ſhe conceived an ill will to-

wards her, that did not eſcape Emma's penetration, notwithſtanding Lady Bell ſometimes found it convenient to diſguiſe it; but, if her favour depended on a ſervile compliance with fancies prejudicial to both, ſhe thought it was beſt to be deprived of it; though ſtill ſhe continued ſincerely attached to her.

This change of ſentiment in Lady Bell, did not, however, make much alteration in her intercourſe with the Wilmington family; for the Earl, who had ſtill his reaſons for keeping well with the Mourtrays, obſerving that the Counteſs had diſcontinued to invite them to her houſe, frequently inſiſted upon having them at leaſt at dinner; and Lady Wilmington herſelf ſaw ſo much to admire in Emma's behaviour, that inſenſibly ſhe became very partial to her.

As for Lady Elizabeth, her coldneſs and reſerve were unalterable; ſhe was one

one of thoſe perſons whoſe feelings are concentrated in ſelf-love.

One evening, Emma being at the opera with her mother, the Proutings, and Mr. Chowles, who now, in deſpite of her coldneſs, followed her like her ſhadow, Lord Miramont came into the pit; and though he did not join her, ſhe obſerved that he hovered about, at a little diſtance, during a whole act; pretending, however, not particularly to notice her, otherwiſe than by a bow.

At length, during the dance, a vacant place being next to her, he careleſsly ſauntered towards it; and, ſeating himſelf, began to rally her on Chowles's very marked attentions.

This was almoſt the only diſagreeable topic of converſation that he could have choſen, in the opinion of Emma, who tried in vain to get rid of it.

"I wonder," ſaid the Marquis, "whether his name is Henry; for, as he calls you *his* nut-brown maid, you cannot do leſs than ſay, ſince he has had the cruelty to leave you—*And where is Emma's joy, if Henry flies?*"

"I ſhould much ſooner be inclined to ſay, and great is Emma's joy, whenever he is ſo obliging to depart. But," added ſhe, more gravely—"if your Lordſhip will be ſo good to refrain from naming this man to me, you will really oblige me."

"Upon no account would I diſoblige you," ſaid he: "but will you permit me to ſay, I ſhould like to know, ſince poor Mr. Chowles is ſo unfortunate, what ſort of a man has more chance of gaining your favour."

"I have not thought on the ſubject," anſwered ſhe, colouring extremely: "nor

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is it worth exciting your Lordſhip's curioſity."

"I ſuſpect he muſt not be fat and ſhort, and inelegant in manners; but as accompliſhed and engaging as Prior makes his Henry."

"Engaging!" cried Emma; "I diſlike his character; and I never could read his cruel trial of Emma with patience."

"Well, but the poet brought all right at laſt; and that is as things ſhould be; and you muſt acknowledge, Miſs Mourtray, it afforded an opportunity to the heroine of the poem, to ſhew unparalleled love."

"More than the object deſerved; for he ſhewed an ungenerous diſtruſt of her ſentiments, and little delicacy in his own."

"You are ſo good yourſelf, and refined in your notions, that you expect more perfection in others, than it is poſſible you ſhould ever find Believe me, young men are quite different ſort of creatures from thoſe imaginary heroes in novels, deſcribed as poſſeſſing every virtue, and exempt from every vice; which very young Ladies innocently ſuppoſe to be real pictures of life."

"Indeed," ſaid Emma, laughing, "I have not formed my ideas of either men or women after novels. Perfection, I apprehend, is no where to be found; we are none of us as good as we ought to be; and, ſenſible of our own defects, we muſt view the errors of others with indulgence."

"I wiſh I knew the degree of indulgence," ſaid Lord Miramont, looking earneſtly at her—"you aſſign to every

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ſort of error, and which you think entitled to the moſt."

"I do not pretend to judge of the conduct of others," replied ſhe; "yet I think it cannot admit of doubt, that thoſe errors are the leaſt offenſive that only injure the perſon who commits them; and that thoſe that proceed rather from a weak head, than a bad heart, are the moſt excuſable."

The return of Chowles interrupted a converſation which had been rather intereſting to Emma, and had the effect to drive away the Marquis.

An idea, which though faintly traced, gave her, nevertheleſs, infinite delight, now aroſe in her mind, that Lord Miramont ſaw her with ſome degree of partiality: yet ſhe well knew, by all ſhe had heard ſince her acquaintance in the world became more extenſive, that he

certainly was attached to Lady Fredville, who, ſhe underſtood, was ſo artful and inſinuating a woman, that it would be difficult for him to break from her fetters.

That he ſhould have an attachment to a married woman, ſhocked the delicacy of her principles: but though ſhe could not excuſe this, ſhe was more diſpoſed to attribute his being thus entangled, to the arts of a wicked woman, and to the effects of bad example, than to the depravity of his own heart.

Could he but be weaned, ſhe thought, from his improper attachment, and reformed in his principles in regard to women, how amiable he would be, and how happy the perſon who ſhould become his wife!—Who ever poſſeſſed more advantages united? Handſome; captivating whenever he pleaſed; ſenſible, gay, and good-humoured; nobly

born

born, high in rank, and, without being very rich, having ſufficient fortune to appear ſuitably to his dignity.

Emma, though a little vain, dared not, however, own to herſelf that ever the idea of being this happy woman entered her head: ſhe therefore perſuaded herſelf that her ardent deſire to ſee him detached from Lady Fredville, was merely becauſe ſhe wiſhed to ſee him quite perfect.

The report of the world concerning this lady was, that, in the various gallantries in which ſhe had been engaged, ſhe always ſhewed leſs tenderneſs towards her lover than deſire of governing him; which her ſuperior beauty and faſcinating talents made no difficult taſk.—Though her temper was unequal and capricious, ſhe had the art of attaching men beyond all other women; chiefly by ſtudying their diſpoſitions, conſulting their inclinations, humouring their fan-

cies, when ſhe wanted to carry a point; and, above all, by making them find in her houſe the moſt perfect eaſe—every elegance in her eſtabliſhment, and every ſort of amuſement.

Henry Mourtray, who had been in town ſome weeks, now declared to his father, that, finding in himſelf neither talents nor inclination for the ſtudy of the law, he wiſhed to obtain his permiſſion to go into the army.

Mourtray deferred, till he had maturely conſidered, giving any anſwer to this requeſt; and poſſibly he might have protracted it a long while, had not the matter reached Lord Wilmington's ears, who eagerly ſeized ſo favourable an opportunity of conferring an obligation on the Mourtrays, by procuring, through his intereſt, a pair of colours for Henry.

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He ſaid, however, nothing of this, either to him or his father; for Emma was the perſon to whom he choſe to announce this event. Therefore, one day, when ſhe dined in Groſvenor Square, he drew her aſide before dinner, and ſaid, in a low voice, with his eyes twinkling, and his eternal grin on his face, "My dear Miſs Mourtray, I hope, knows what a ſincere regard, value, and eſteem I have for her; and, indeed, upon her account, for all thoſe belonging to her. It gives me, therefore, ſingular pleaſure, that I am enabled, by the intereſt I have with my good friend, Lord —— to have the honour of preſenting your brother with a pair of colours."

Emma, extremely delighted with this intelligence, which ſhe knew would be ſo agreeable to Henry, made her acknowledgments with ſo much warmth and grace, that Lord Wilmington, ſnatching her hand, gallantly preſſed it to his lips,

lips; proteſting, that if, at any time, it could be his good fortune to be of the ſlighteſt uſe to her, in any way ſhe would do him the honour to point out, ſhe might command, without reſerve, a perſon who was entirely devoted to herſelf and friends.

He was continuing in this ſtyle, when Emma, thinking he had ſaid more than enough for the occaſion, and rather ſurprized at an extraordinary glow that ſuffuſed his cheeks, judged it time to draw back. She returned, therefore, to her ſeat, after making him a low courteſy, but with ſuch reſerve of manner as inſtantly reſtored to the Earl's face its wonted ſcowl; and, on ſome pretence, he left the room.

"Pray, Emma," cried Lady Bell, very loud, on purpoſe that her mother might hear her, "Pray, has papa been ſaying ſweet things to you? for you have had a pretty long and animated tête-à-tête

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in the window; and, if my eyes did not deceive me, I ſaw him kiſſing your lily hand."

"Really, Bell," cried Lady Wilmington, angrily, "you grow inſufferably fooliſh. I think, at leaſt, when you chooſe to make your ſilly jokes, you might find a fitter ſubject for them than your father."

"Upon my honour, mamma, . . ."

"Be ſilent; let me hear no more of this nonſenſe!" interrupted Lady Wilmington: "Miſs Mourtray, come here: —if Lord Wilmington's communication is not a ſecret, perhaps you will relate it to me?"

"Certainly, madam," anſwered Emma, who ſimply mentioned the gift of the colours; expreſſing her gratitude for it; and Lady Wilmington, perfectly

ſatisfied, ſaid, ſhe was pleaſed at the circumſtance. Emma, however, knew that there was ſome truth in Lady Bell's ſurmiſes, though ſhe was aware of her malicious intention of making miſchief.

After dinner, in deſpite of her ſulky looks, Emma communicated to her the ſubject of her ſecret conference with the Earl; upon which Lady Bell remarked, with a ſneer, "that Emma's family, no doubt, would have cauſe to rejoice at the influence ſhe had obtained with her father."

Emma, hurt and ſurprized at this ſpeech, diſclaimed, with ſome warmth, having ever attempted to acquire any with him; but Lady Bell, without ſpeaking, with a toſs of her head, left her, and for ſome time ſeldom exchanged a word with her, except in company, when ſhe could not avoid it without incurring her mother's diſpleaſure.

Emma

Emma had long felt, with concern, that ſhe had erred in the too favourable opinion ſhe had formed of Lady Bell's diſpoſition; but ſhe ſtill believed ſhe had a very good heart; and, not being at all prone to fickleneſs herſelf, her attachment reſiſted Lady Bell's ſlights.

Henry Mourtray was made ſupremely happy by his ſiſter's intelligence; becauſe he ſhould now wear a cockade and a red coat, which he fancied infinitely becoming. His father received it with his uſual *ſang froid*, anknowledging himſelf, however, obliged to the Earl; but Mrs. Mourtray ſhed tears, anticipating the dangers to which his precious perſon would be expoſed.

Henry, to do him juſtice, had no fear of encountering theſe; for, though a complete coxcomb, he certainly was extremely brave and ſpirited.

Had

Had it not been for this new diſturbance of Henry's going into the army, Mrs. Mourtray would have conſidered the preſent period of her life as the happieſt ſhe had known ſince the days of her romance of bread and cheeſe, and love in a cottage had ended.

As youth and beauty had faded, her notions of happineſs had undergone much alteration: now her delights were centred in a carriage (the want of which ſhe had ſo long lamented), in a good houſe in London, and in buſtle and company.

Emma was ſtill the object of her fond affection; leſs on account of her amiable qualities, than becauſe ſhe was exceſſively pretty. Henry, too, whom ſhe loved to exceſs, was chiefly valued for his beauty; and the ſame want of penetration which prevented her diſcerning her daughter's ſuperior merit, rendered her blind to his foibles. As to her huſband,

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ſhe loved him from habit; but his abſence of mind, his taciturnity, his inſenſibility to trifles (objects to her of the utmoſt importance), often provoked her. She was, however, good-natured, and meant well; therefore certainly was concerned whenever ſhe ſaw him ſuffer; but as her feelings were far from refined, her behaviour, on many occaſions, rather teazed than relieved him: ſtill, however, he loved her tenderly.

Having, for ſo large a portion of her life, endured the inconveniences of a narrow income, her chief ſolicitude was to procure an affluent eſtabliſhment for her daughter; not, perhaps, without thinking of the advantages ſhe might derive from this herſelf. The immenſe wealth of Chowles, and all the magnificence he diſplayed, ſo completely dazzled her eyes, that, forgetting the diſparity of their years, the difference of their characters, ſentiments, and inclinations,

nations, ſhe thought that, as he ſeemed extremely in love with Emma, it would be very wrong to loſe an opportunity of diſpoſing of her ſo advantageouſly, and that her gentleneſs and pliancy of temper would prevent her making much oppoſition.

Always in a hurry about every thing, exactly the reverſe of her huſband, ſhe had no ſooner formed this project, than ſhe determined not to reſt till it was accompliſhed: but in this ſhe met unexpected obſtacles; for, upon diſcloſing it to Mourtray, he, with more firmneſs than uſual, proteſted that he would never conſent even to have the ſubject mentioned to Emma; convinced it muſt be diſagreeable to her; and added, that he himſelf had many objections to ſuch a choice.

With Henry, whom ſhe endeavoured to draw over to her opinion, Mrs. Mourtray had as little ſucceſs; for he impetuouſly

onſly exclaimed, ſtepping back ſome paces,—"What, marry Emma, one of the prettieſt girls in London, to that old goggle-eyed fellow! Why, ſurely, madam, you have loſt your ſenſes!"

"Nay, but, Henry, only think what a vaſt fortune he has!"

"Curſe on him and his fortune, too! What the devil do you ſuppoſe nobody but that fellow is ever to be in love with her? I dare ſay, whenever ſhe chooſes, ſhe may marry a man full as rich, without his being ſuch a *quiz*. Pray, don't name him again; it makes me ſick to hear of him."

Since his acquaintance began with the Mourtrays, Chowles, for the firſt time in his life, felt a ſomething at his heart which convinced him that there were other paſſions full as troubleſome as covetouſneſs; and he ſettled he would have Emma,

Emma, coſt what ſhe would. But he ſoon found that he had only one ally in her family; and this ally powerleſs to promote his cauſe. he perceived, therefore, that, to carry it, he muſt depend upon himſelf alone.

Although the diſplay of his wealth ſeemed hitherto to have made no impreſſion in his favour, he ſtill could not conceive that the firſt of all goods, according to his ideas, ſhould fail in attractions to another.

As balls now were much the faſhion, Chowles reſolved to give one that ſhould far ſurpaſs, in magnificence, all thoſe daily given by the nobility:—this, he hoped, would enchant Emma: but he had ſome difficulty in arranging this buſineſs; for he had very few acquaintance at the weſt end of the town. However, he was fortunately relieved by learning that it was now the cuſtom for perſons to fill

fill their houſes by getting others to invite their company; and that no more was expected from the owner than to provide the entertainment.

Mrs. Prouting, therefore, was the agent he meant to employ with thoſe great Ladies, whoſe aſſiſtance he required on this occaſion. Her family name was Chowles; but, in the early part of the merchant's life, when his fortune and future proſpects were low and humble, her parents and ſelf had conſtantly diſowned his belonging to them: yet no ſooner had he, by unwearied induſtry, and ſome fortunate chances, accumulated great wealth, than the whole family were eager to claim relationſhip with him.

Old muſty parchments were produced, and carefully examined: a doubtful ſort of genealogy appeared, but which they declared was perfectly clear; and they decided that he was deſcended from the ſame

ſame ſtock as themſelves: he was, therefore, gratified with a long pedigree; and, though he cared little about the matter, at their requeſt, he took proper meaſures to blazon the arms of Chowles.

His couſin, who had married an indigent man of faſhion (the younger brother of an Iriſh peer), was one of the moſt eager to cultivate his acquaintance; and, as his former habits of life, and his long abſence from England, had made him, on his return, feel like a ſtranger in London, nothing could be more convenient to him than the countenance of a woman, who, though little known in the firſt ſocieties, could, at leaſt, introduce him to her own; eſpecially, as the vanity of diſplaying his riches was one of his predominant paſſions.

Mrs. Prouting, in return, naturally expected many douceurs for herſelf and huſband: by her perſuaſions Chowles had been

been induced to employ the intereſt of his purſe to bring him into parliament; a material convenience to a younger brother, who, figuring away upon a ſcanty fortune, was loaded with debts.

To ſpare Chowles the *ennui* of ſolitude during the ſummer, Mr. and Mrs. Prouting obligingly took up their reſidence with him in the country; and, to ſave him trouble in town, they undertook to do the honours of his houſe whenever he had company, which was frequently the caſe.

But with all this apppearance of cordiality, very little, in fact, ſubſiſted between them. Chowles neither wanted memory nor cunning; the former faithfully retained all the ſlights and mortifications he had experienced in his youth, from herſelf and family; and the latter penetrated through all the artful ſchemes that both the huſband and wife

formed for the promotion of their own intereſt, at his expence.

Mrs. Prouting, who flattered herſelf ſhe ſhould be of immenſe conſequence at a fête given by her couſin, readily undertook to ſpeak to ſeveral ladies, to requeſt they would invite, in the name of Chowles, a ſufficient number of faſhionable people to make a very brilliant ball. He himſelf determined to ſend a card to Lady Wilmington and her daughters, as he admired Lady Bell, and choſe to conſider her and her mother as acquaintances, ſince the night he had obtruded himſelf upon them at the opera. But though many of the great ladies in town were making intereſt to get to this ball, Lady Wilmington, thinking very differently from them, received his invitation with diſdain, and ordered her porter to return the card, which, ſhe ſaid, muſt have been left by miſtake. Lady Iſabella,

bella, therefore, did not go, to her very great mortification, to this ſplendid fête.

So many perſons having the liberty of giving invitations, the ball was one of the greateſt crowds ever known, and occaſioned innumerable mortifications to Chowles; for, in general, the fine people aſſembled paid very little attention to him, unleſs it were to laugh at, or make him ironical compliments. Some thought only how they ſhould eſcape home unhurt; others were intent merely on their own amuſement: ſome, indeed, admired his fine plate, and the decorations of the apartments; but this gratification to his vanity was ſadly counterbalanced by the torture it gave him to ſee greaſy heads leaning againſt his ſilk hangings; warm hands paſſing over his highly-varniſhed cabinets; and his capital pictures *viewed* with the tips of fingers.

Emma, the ſecret object of the fête, and whoſe ſmiles might have conſoled

him for all theſe grievances, did, indeed, by her mother's command, conſent to dance with him; but before they had gone down three couple, not without infinite labour, a very great lady with a large party ſuddenly puſhing their way into the room, Chowles, by their irruption, was ſeparated from his partner, whom he never could find again, till, overcome with heat, fatigue, and vexation, he found himſelf unable to renew the dance.

His only hope now was, that ſupper would afford him ſome reſt, and that he ſhould have the comfort of ſitting near Emma; but he was ſo much annoyed with the ſcramble and confuſion of people getting to the ſupper-room, that he gaſped for breath as he ſunk into a ſeat, with which he was complimented, next to an ugly old Ducheſs.

The fine ſpeeches that ſhe and ſeveral other perſons made him, on the magni-

magnificence of the entertainment, ſomewhat cheered his ſpirits, till, unfortunately, they were again depreſſed by ſeeing, as he ſtood up to take a view of the company, at another table, Emma, more lovely than ever; her eyes lighted with pleaſure; ſitting next to Lord Miramont, who ſeemed unuſually attentive to her.

This, indeed, was one of the moſt agreeable evenings ſhe had ever known; for ſhe had danced with the Marquis, and afterwards he had placed himſelf by her ſide, at ſupper. Immediately after it ended, he went away; but as ſhe loved dancing, and then had ſo excellent a partner as Sydney, ſhe endeavoured not to regret the other. Yet, as ſoon as ſhe had gone down the dance, the charms of the ball ceaſed for her; and, to avoid converſing with Sydney, ſhe preſſed her mother to go home.

Mrs. Prouting, though ſhe had been leſs diſappointed than her couſin, had not met with half the attention ſhe expected; therefore, ſhe did not contradict him when he aſſerted, after the houſe was clear, that, in entertaining very fine folks, who thought their company did him honour, he had put himſelf to a very enormous expenſe, and ſuffered incredible fatigue, to very little purpoſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

A FEW days after the ball, Emma received a letter from Du Maſſon, with whom ſhe occaſionally correſponded; which, after ſlightly touching upon his own affairs, contained a detail of circumſtances of uncommon diſtreſs that had come to his knowledge, relative to a French family of the firſt diſtinction, lately arrived in England, and now lodging (as he ſaid) in a garret, in a ſmall ſtreet, near the Haymarket.

Du Maſſon had much eloquence in his ſtyle; and, though not inſenſible to the diſtreſſes of any unfortunate perſon, to thoſe of his countrymen he was ſuſceptible beyond meaſure, provided they were *bons Catholiques* and *Royaliſtes*. He concluded a moſt pathetic narration, by

 conjuring

conjuring Emma to find out theſe noble emigrants; and, as far as poſſible, by herſelf and friends, to afford them relief.

Much leſs than he ſaid would have ſufficed to melt her ſoft heart into pity, and to ſtimulate her to make every exertion in favour of theſe ſufferers. But, unfortunately, her purſe, at this time, happened to be at a very low ebb; for, with more vanity than prudence, ſhe had ſpent in dreſs no trifling ſum; and, aſhamed of applying to her father again, who had ſo liberally ſupplied her, ſhe ſat deſpondent, lamenting her own extravagance.

From her mother ſhe had no hopes of aſſiſtance; for, beſides obſerving that her compaſſion never extended to foreigners, ſhe well knew that ſhe was continually making new purchaſes; not ſo much in the ornamental way, as in what ſhe called great bargains, which ſhe treaſured up for

for future occaſions; and ſhe often grumbled that her huſband, who had got ſuch an increaſe of fortune, inſtead of letting her ſpend what ſhe thought neceſſary to appear in a proper ſtyle in London, rather choſe to throw away his money in abſurd alterations at Downton, which would always be a dull out-of-the-way place; and alſo in idle projects and ſpeculations, which ſhe neither did, nor wiſhed to underſtand.

Emma's only hope, therefore, reſted on a few of her opulent acquaintance, whoſe benevolence ſhe determined to ſolicit on this occaſion, but not till ſhe herſelf had inveſtigated the real ſituation of the French family; for which purpoſe, without declaring her deſign, ſhe borrowed her mother's carriage the following morning; and, leaving it in the Haymarket, ſhe ſallied forth, attended by a footman, in ſearch of the houſe deſcribed by Du

Maſſon, which, after ſome difficulty, ſhe found.

It was a little mean place, in a bye ſtreet, the lower part of it occupied by a turner's ſhop; the firſt floor by a woman, who waſhed and mended lace; and the upper rooms by theſe unfortunate emigrants.

It did not occur to her, till the moment that a dirty maid opened the ſtreet door, that her viſit to theſe ſtrangers might appear odd and impertinent; but, having got ſo far, ſhe determined, to proceed; and after preſenting them, in the name of Du Maſſon, with a ſmall packet, containing three guineas, ſealed up in a piece of paper (all ſhe poſſeſſed) ſhe reſolved to depart inſtantly, without waiting till they opened it.

Upon her enquiry whether ſhe could ſee the French Ladies, the maid anſwered

in

in the affirmative; and, preceding her up ſtairs, opened a door, crying out, "One wants you, Ma'am:" then, beckoning to Emma to enter, ſhe cloſed the door after her; and the former found herſelf awkwardly obtruded on ſtrangers, who ſeemed not leſs diſconcerted than herſelf by her abrupt entrance.

She ventured, however, to apologize in French; and, as ſhe ſpoke, the ſoftneſs of her accent, the reſpectful civility of her expreſſions, and the bluſhes which covered her cheeks, wrought ſo powerfully in her favour, that the elder of two Ladies in the room ſprang towards her, exclaiming, "*Seigneur Dieu! mais c'eſt un Ange, qui nous tombe du Ciel!*"

Emma then preſented her packet, as a commiſſion with which ſhe had been charged, ſhe ſaid, by M. Du Maſſon, her friend; and, to avoid anſwering any queſtions, ſhe was preparing to retire.

But the old Lady, looking ſurprized, ſaid ſhe knew no perſon of that name, excepting a poor old prieſt, an emigrant, like herſelf, with whom, however, ſhe had a very ſlight acquaintance; and, tearing open the paper, ſhe inſiſted it was impoſſible he could ſend her the encloſed.

"If, Madam," ſaid Emma, "it is the Ducheſs of ———, whom I have the honour of addreſſing, there certainly is no miſtake; and, having performed my commiſſion, I beg leave to wiſh her a good day."

The Ducheſs made a geſture of aſtoniſhment upon hearing her name, and her eyes filled with tears, whilſt ſhe ſeemed heſitating, whether ſhe ſhould keep the money ſhe ſtill held in her hand. At length ſhe ſaid, "My pride, I know, is blameable: it ought to ſtoop to our humiliating wretched ſituation; if not on my

my own account, for the ſake of thoſe helpleſs innocents (pointing to two children): I will, therefore, accept of this bounty, come whence it may."

The air of dignity which accompanied her words, gave her rather the appearance of conferring than receiving a favour; yet it was but too evident, that never people ſtood more in need of aſſiſtance than herſelf and family.

She was a tall noble-looking woman, a little bent, ſeemingly more by ſorrow than by age; and her whole perſon denoted want and neglect.

An old man, whom ſhe introduced as her huſband, and who bowed, without ſpeaking, whether from natural or acquired inſenſibility, his feelings having, perhaps, been deadened by his ſufferings, ſeemed to take no intereſt in what was paſſing. He ſtood immoveable by the fire,

fire, watching a ſaucepan; and his dreſs, which was an old velvet coat, a bag wig, and, over that, a dirty night cap, ſingularly contraſted with his occupation.

By a window ſat a young woman; who, after riſing, for an inſtant, when Emma entered the room, reſeated herſelf, and continued her work, as if ſhe grudged every minute ſhe paſſed unemployed.—She was very pretty, though pale and languid, and Emma felt particularly intereſted for her.

The Ducheſs apologized, that her daughter-in-law continued at her needle. "Alas!" ſaid ſhe, "ſhe works from day-break till very late at night, to get bread for her poor children."

The needle now, for an inſtant, was ſuſpended, whilſt the young woman held her hand over her eyes, with an expreſſion of woe, which penetrated to the heart

of

of Emma, who was on the point of advancing to ſay ſomething conſoling to her; but ſhe checked herſelf, feeling it indelicate to notice her emotion; and, not to treſpaſs longer on this family, ſhe took her leave, firmly reſolved to try to procure them, at leaſt, the neceſſaries to comfort and cleanlineſs; for ſhe had obſerved that they had only one wretched bed, beſides a ſtraw mattreſs, ſpread on the floor, upon which were lying the two children. Three half-broken chairs, and an old table, completed their ſtock of furniture. That day ſhe was to dine at Chowles's; and there ſhe hoped, where there was ſuch unbounded wealth, ſhe might eaſily obtain a trifle for her purpoſe. The interval before dinner was ſo ſhort, when ſhe got to Hanover Square, that no opportunity offered of mentioning what filled all her thoughts.

But, after dinner, when coffee was brought into the drawing-room to the Ladies,

Ladies, conſiſting only of herſelf, her mother, and Mrs. Prouting, ſhe determined to make her firſt attack on the charity of the latter. In as few words as poſſible ſhe began relating her little tale; when Mrs. Mourtray, interrupting her, ſaid, "I am quite tired of ſtories of emigrants;" and Mrs. Prouting, ſuddenly ſtarting up, exclaimed, "O Lord! talking of emigrants! I have ſuch a treaſure to ſhew you!"—and then, for an inſtant, diſappearing, ſhe returned with a little white *barbet* in her arms. "Did you ever ſee ſuch a love?" cried ſhe.

"Very pretty, indeed!" ſaid Emma, "but let me finiſh my ſtory: I am ſure it will move you very much."

"Rather let me tell you how I came by my dog!—Think of my luck in getting him, and ſo cheap too!—only eight guineas!"

"Very

" Very fortunate, indeed!—O! that you would but give me only the quarter of this ſum for the poor....!"

" Look at his pretty black eyes! Do you know he can lay in my muff; but he ſhall have a nice bed, that he ſhall!"

" The people I am telling you of have a moſt wretched bed, and only *that*, and one mattreſs, amongſt them all!"

" Shocking indeed! Don't you think he ought to be-ſhaved to look like a lion!"

" Indeed, I do not know," cried Emma, quite diſguſted; and, though almoſt hopeleſs of ſucceſs, bent on perſeverance. " Let me entreat you," ſhe continued, " to contribute ſome trifle: I ſhould think myſelf obliged to you for half-a-guinea."

Mrs.

Mrs. Mourtray, moved by her earneſtneſs, gave her a guinea; but Mrs. Prouting ſaid, coldly, "You mean, I ſuppoſe, to make a raffle? I am very ready to ſubſcribe, as far as a guinea, if they have got any pretty things to diſpoſe of; but I ſhould like, firſt, to know what they are, and if you have ſeen them."

"I have ſeen nothing, Madam, but extreme want and miſery; however, I will trouble you no further on the ſubject."

"Really, Miſs Mourtray, you cannot think how very poor I am."

"Yet, Madam, you can give eight guineas for a dog!"

Mrs. Prouting coloured, and the entrance of the Gentlemen put an end to the converſation. Mourtray, his ſon, and Sydney, accompanied Chowles: the latter had

had taken a fancy to Sydney the night he gave the ball; becauſe, though not invited by him, he had ſhewn him the civility and attention he thought due to the maſter of the entertainment.

Though Emma had ſucceeded ſo ill in her benevolent deſign with Mrs. Prouting, ſhe entertained very ſanguine hopes of being made ample amends by Chowles, who was ſo profuſe in his expenſes, that, if even his heart was not warmed by charity, he would be liberal from oſtentation, eſpecially as he ſeemed ſo deſirous of conciliating her favour.

Inſtead, therefore, of avoiding him, as uſual, ſhe remained on a ſopha, in a niche, at a little diſtance from the reſt of the company, where, as ſhe expected, he joined her. Suſpecting that a pathetic tale would make little impreſſion on his dull organs, ſhe jocoſely told him that ſhe had a deſign on his purſe; and having a high

high opinion of his humanity, had no doubt of receiving an immediate proof of it, in favour of a very diſtreſſed French family.

Chowles, who was highly delighted at her eagerneſs to ſpeak to him, let his under lip gradually fall as ſhe proceeded in her ſpeech, and ſeemed much puzzled what to anſwer. However, after aſſuring her that he would do any thing ſhe pleaſed, he endeavoured to turn off the diſcourſe.

This Emma would not ſuffer; and, to bring him to the point at once, ſhe ſaid;—"Well, Mr. Chowles, how far do you mean to indulge yourſelf in giving to theſe noble ſufferers?"

"Indulge, indeed! Pretty ſort of indulgence, by jingo!"—adding, in a mumbling voice, ſomething about dupes, impoſtors, and French cheats; which Emma interrupted

interrupted by ſaying, ſhe had witneſſed herſelf the diſtreſs ſhe related.

" O! I have no doubt of this, Miſs Mourtray," ſaid he, " and it is all mighty moving, to be ſure. But, Lord bleſs you, if I was to liſten to half the ſtories of the kind I hear every day, and give here, and give there, I ſhould not have a farthing myſelf; and then who would encourage the arts, as I have a pride in doing?—Not your fine Lords, I am ſure: their money goes more readily to the gaming table; but I tell you, Miſs Mourtray, it is ſuch honeſt fellows as me, who, by their own induſtry, have made their fortunes, and have the ſpirit to ſpend it properly, who ....."

" It is on that liberality of mind I depend," interrupted Emma; " therefore I apply to you in preference to others."

" O, cer-

"O, certainly! you are quite right. But, as I was going to tell you, if a man has a capital picture, or any thing elſe that is curious on his hands, why, he naturally brings it to Simon Chowles; for I'm the perſon, do you ſee, who, without haggling, pays down, at once, his money, and there's an end of it; for, you know, I hate ſhabby doings."

"Would to God you loved benevolent ones! Then you would open your purſe on this occaſion."

"O! I will! but tell me what recompenſe will you make me? I know what would make me give you any thing, even my old Japan cabinet."

"Your old Japan cabinet!" repeated Emma, repenting exceedingly that ſhe had been pleading to ſuch a man;—"I want nothing, Sir, from you for myſelf, and

and I am ſorry to have even ſpoken to you in behalf of others."

"Lord bleſs me!" cried Chowles, preventing her from moving: "Lord bleſs me! How eaſily beauties, and fine Ladies, take offence! Why, now, did not I, at the firſt, tell you I would do ſomething for theſe foreign folks?"

"I beg your pardon, Sir, if I miſunderſtood you; and I rejoice, for your own ſake, that your heart is not inacceſſible to pity."

"Will your's feel any for me, my pretty nut-brown?" ſaid Chowles, ogling her, as he thought, tenderly.

"I have often told you, Sir, that I do not underſtand your taking the liberty of thus addreſſing me; and, as I ſee you are again wandering from the ſubject we were upon, I ſhall leave you."

"Well,

"Well, to pleaſe you, and make my peace, you may tell theſe people to call upon my clerk, at the counting-houſe, and he will ſee what can be done for them."

"Good Heaven, Mr. Chowles! You forget their rank in life! I am ſure I could not propoſe to them ſo degrading a ſtep."

"Odds bobs! how you talk! I like beggars being degraded, indeed! But, to ſatisfy you, I will ſee them myſelf, if they will call here any day, at four o'clock."

But Emma, who now dreaded the coarſe mode in which he would give relief, declined accepting any from him, and haſtened to join her mother.

Sydney, without meaning to liſten, had over-heard great part of the dialogue between her and Chowles, which he confeſſed

feſſed to her, at the ſame time requeſting ſhe would allow him to ſend five guineas to her *protegées*, to which ſhe conſented with thanks.

Emma, in her way home, determined that ſhe would apply next to Lady Wilmington; who, being ſo nobly born herſelf, would undoubtedly, ſhe thought, hear with commiſeration of the unmerited misfortunes of perſons of her own rank; and that her ſentiments muſt be very different from thoſe of the groveling Chowles, whoſe character was a compound of meanneſs and oſtentation.

Eager to make this experiment, Emma went the next morning to Groſvenor Square; and, to her no ſmall ſatisfaction, found the Counteſs at home, and with her none but her daughters, and Lord Miramont.

After the diſcouraging events of the preceding evening, ſhe could not relate her tale without ſome degree of heſitation; and her voice faltered as ſhe added—that, knowing Lady Wilmington's goodneſs, ſhe preſumed to ſolicit her aſſiſtance on this occaſion.

While ſhe had been ſpeaking, her Ladyſhip had not attempted to interrupt her: ſhe was too well bred; but ſhe could not entirely ſuppreſs ſome very diſheartening yawns, which Emma conſtrued as a moſt unfavourable preſage of what was to follow.

"This is a very diſmal ſtory, indeed, Miſs Mourtray!" ſaid ſhe, "I really wiſh you had not told it me; for, you know, I am extremely nervous, and I ſhall not get it out of my head all the day. Beſides, the Fontelieus are a branch of the

Duc

Duc de ——'s family: they came to England with William the Conqueror."

"I knew, Madam," cried Emma, with reviving ſpirits, "I knew that I might depend upon your benevolence."

"You do me but juſtice; and I give you my word, I will take the earlieſt opportunity of leaving my name with the Ducheſs."

"My dear Madam!" cried Emma, "though a viſit from your Ladyſhip might gratify her extremely, if ſhe could receive you properly, it is at preſent more urgent (if you will excuſe my ſaying it) to aſſiſt her with common neceſſaries."

"Very true; but, unfortunately, you come at a moſt unfavourable moment; for both laſt night, and the night before, I loſt no leſs than five and twenty gui-

deas! Lady ——— managed the pool, and ſcolded all the time; ſo no wonder I loſt; and little Lord ———, who can do nothing elſe but play at cards, loſt twice as much, becauſe he played longer; and then, afterwards, he went to faro, which I never play at."

"Your Ladyſhip was, indeed, very unlucky; but you may recover your loſſes, which, I apprehend, will not be the caſe with the poor emigrants."

"I uſed to doat upon the French," cried Lady Bell, who had not yet ſpoken: "formerly they ſet us beautiful faſhions, and they were gay, and quite the thing. But now I *ſhirk* them; for they look ſo ſhabby, and are become ſo troubleſome."

"Is not that rather their misfortune, than their fault?" aſked Emma.

"May

" May be ſo; but, to avoid their plaguing me, I make it a rule to have nothing to ſay to them."

Emma, who attended little to Lady Bell, and who durſt not renew her application to her mother, ſat penſive; only now and then ſhe ventured to caſt an anxious look towards Lady Wilmington, to watch for ſome favourable indications of benevolence in her countenance, towards thoſe whom ſhe had eagerly acknowledged, as part of her Lord's family.

The Counteſs, who read her thoughts, after a ſhort ſilence, ſaid, " I ſhall certainly, hereafter, do ſomething to make this poor Ducheſs more comfortable; but, at preſent, the ſmall trifle I have at my command is neither fit for *me* to ſend, nor for *her* to receive." She ſpoke theſe words with great dignity and ſelf-approbation, and then left the room.

Lady Elizabeth had already glided away; and Lady Bell proteſted ſhe had not a ſix-pence in her pocket, which Emma readily believed, knowing that ſhe conſtantly exceeded her allowance, contracted debts, and ſometimes even condeſcended to borrow of her. Had Lord Wilmington been preſent, Emma might have been tempted to apply to him; though, ſince the converſation that took place relative to the colours, ſhe had been ſhy of ſpeaking to him.

But Lord Miramont's behaviour, during the courſe of her viſit, filled her with amazement and vexation. He had ſtood the whole time, lolling over the back of a chair, now twirling a whip, then humming an opera air, totally inattentive to what was paſſing, and not once opening his lips.

Exceſſively

Exceſſively provoked at ſuch inſenſibility, Emma would not deign to apply to him, and ſcarcely courteſying as ſhe paſſed him to leave the room; ſhe began, in her way home, to ſcrutinize her heart, with an uncommon degree of ſeverity.

"How came I," thought ſhe, "ever to be faſcinated by this man? It muſt have been by his exterior alone, and the ſplendour of his ſituation! What wretched motives for my fooliſh predilection!—Yet I muſt own, that he is very agreeable and good-humoured: ſo are many worthleſs people. But what are Lord Miramont's purſuits? Can I recollect any other than thoſe that tend to the gratification of his paſſions? How unfeeling did he appear juſt now!"

She was continuing theſe reflections, when they were interrupted by hearing herſelf

herſelf called by the object of them, who, with a quick ſtep, joined her.

"I feared," ſaid he, "I had not eſcaped in time to have the pleaſure of overtaking you, Miſs Mourtray."

Emma, coldly, bent her head, but went on in ſilence.

"Do you know," continued he, "if I were anxious to gain a cauſe, I ſhould wiſh extremely to retain you to plead it; for perſuaſion dwells in your eyes and voice."

"I have no reaſon to think ſo," replied ſhe, gravely, diſpleaſed with his flattery; "for my firſt attempts in this way have been extremely unfortunate."

"Only with thoſe perſons, who, for various reaſons, were likely to be callous. My

My aunt, though ſhe has many excellent qualities, is, as you cannot be ignorant, rather lofty in her ideas: her pride would not ſuffer her to preſent a ſmall donation; and, I ſuppoſe, ſhe really juſt now has not much to beſtow; for, before you came, ſhe had been lamenting her extraordinary ill luck at cards; and people, after loſing, are not apt to be very liberal."

"I ſuppoſe ſo," was Emma's laconic reply.

"Now, in regard to my couſins," continued he, "what could you expect from them? The decoration of their perſons, I dare ſay, entirely exhauſts their finances; and they have no care, or buſineſs, in this world, but to look pretty. Thus you ſee, Madam, I have accounted why the hearts of three of your auditors were ſhut againſt you. The fourth, who frankly

frankly avows he lives for pleaſure alone, always haſtens to get rid of all unpleaſant ſenſations: your ſtory imprinted ſome on my mind; I, therefore, hurried after you, to entreat your acceptance of this;"—— and he preſented her with a fifty pound note.

Emma bluſhed deeply as ſhe received it:—" O! Lord Miramont!" cried ſhe, " how unjuſtly I thought of you! I am quite aſhamed of myſelf."

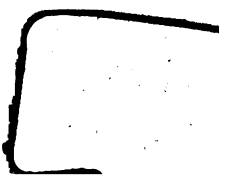
" You have no cauſe to accuſe yourſelf," ſaid he: " I am very ſenſible my actions but too often depoſe againſt my moral character; but my heart, at leaſt, acquits me of inhumanity. I did not, however, wiſh to make a parade of my feelings in Groſvenor Square, where they would be little underſtood; but to you I wiſhed to diſcloſe them."

Emma,

Emma, equally delighted and ſurprized, made him a thouſand acknowledgments of gratitude; and, as he did not leave her till ſhe reached her father's door, ſhe had time to relate every particular; not only relative to the Ducheſs, but likewiſe of the ſcene that paſſed in Hanover Square, which diverted him extremely.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

SEP 2 5 1952



D & T